

A THEORETICAL PSYCHOLOGICAL MODEL OF THE RELATIONSHIP OF
GOD-CONCEPT TO IDENTITY IN A CONSENSUAL RELIGIOUS
PERSON AND ITS THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS
FOR PASTORAL COUNSELING

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I. THE PROBLEM

Probably most pastors and pastoral counselors have at one time or another come in contact with a parishioner or counselee who holds a belief in God that seems to have little personal significance or little relevance to his social views and daily life. Although the person professes to shape his view of ultimate reality in terms of a personal God, it appears that he finds ultimate meaning and value in other sources.

This seeming dichotomy between professed belief and salience of belief has also been noticed and documented by researchers in the sociology and psychology of religion. Although more than 90% of the American people profess a belief in God,¹ studies of American religion by Glock and Stark,² Herberg,³ and Lenski⁴ have all given indication that a commitment to secular sociocultural values outweighs a commitment to religious values. These studies generally indicate that much of American religiousness is little more than a cultural conformism.

¹Will Herberg, Protestant, Catholic, Jew (New York: Doubleday, 1955), p. 72.

²Charles Y. Glock and Rodney Stark, Religion and Society in Tension (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1965).

³Herberg.

⁴Gerhard Lenski, The Religious Factor (Garden City: Doubleday, 1961).

This conclusion is also generally agreed to by some researchers in the field of religion and personality. I will shortly discuss this research. What the sociological and psychological studies point to is the fact that there is a type of religious person who can be called consensually religious; that is, a person whose religious beliefs seem to be motivated, at least on the surface, by a need for socio-cultural conformism.

When confronted with a consensual religious person the pastor and/or the pastoral counselor, being interested in the question of ultimate meaning and value and knowing that a deeply committed religious person finds his ultimate meaning and value in his relationship with God, is faced with the question of what role the consensual religious person's belief in God plays in his personality and his life. This, then, is the problem to be dealt with in this paper. What is the function of the belief in God in the personality of the consensual religious person?

II. THE PURPOSE

To answer this question, I will build a theoretical, psychological model of the relationship of God-concept to identity in the consensual religious person. Because the question of religious belief is significant to pastoral counselors, the theological implications of the proposed model for pastoral counseling will also be explored.

In the remainder of this chapter the identifying characteristics of the consensual type will be delineated, significant definitions

given, and the major hypotheses stated. The chapter will conclude with a description of the methodology of the paper and an explanation of the significance of the study.

III. TWO TYPES OF RELIGION

Empirical Evidence

A large body of empirical research in the field of the psychology of religion indicates that there are two general types of religious believers. In general this research points to an internalized, personally meaningful, and significant religion versus an externalized, secondary, conforming religion, hence a personal religion versus a cultural religion.

The pioneer work of Adorno, et. al. was among the first to make such a distinction in an empirical study of religion.⁵ Seeking to discern the reason for the high incidence of race prejudice among religious believers, Adorno identified what he called the "intrinsic" religious person and the "extrinsic" religious person. The first is one who interiorizes his religious values and the second is one who subordinates his religious values to extrinsic goals. Adorno found the religion of the extrinsic type to be that of social conformism and this type to be more prejudiced than the intrinsic type.⁶

⁵T.W. Adorno, et. al., The Authoritarian Personality (New York: Harper & Row, 1950).

⁶Ibid, p. 730.

Moreover, he concluded that the extrinsic type has an authoritarian, rigid personality as opposed to the nonauthoritarian, open personality of the intrinsic type.

Following Adorno's lead and borrowing his terms, Allport over the years accumulated considerable evidence that confirmed the existence of the intrinsic and extrinsic types.⁷ He concluded that the primary difference between the two is that extrinsic religion is characterized by the quality of utilitarianism. In other words, the extrinsic type uses his religion to accomplish other than religious goals, shaping his beliefs to fit more primary needs, e.g. finding safety, social standing, and solace. On the other hand, according to Allport, the intrinsic type lives his religion, bringing other needs into harmony with his religious beliefs, thus experiencing religion as an end in itself. Allport found a higher incidence of race prejudice in the extrinsic type than in the intrinsic type. He also moved increasingly toward the position that the two religious types represent general personality types.⁸ Other empirical studies have

⁷Gordon W. Allport, The Nature of Prejudice (Cambridge: Addison-Wesley, 1954); Gordon W. Allport, "Religion and Prejudice," Crane Review, II: 1 (1959), 1-10; Gordon W. Allport, "The Religious Context of Prejudice," in William A. Sadler, Jr. (ed.) Personality and Religion (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), pp. 73-88; Gordon W. Allport and J. Michael Ross, "Personal Religious Orientation," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, V: 4 (1967) 432-443.

⁸James E. Dittes, "Psychology of Religion," in Gardner Lindzey and Elliot Aronson (eds.) The Handbook of Social Psychology (Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley, 1969), p. 622.

tended to support Allport's typology and his finding that race prejudice is correlated with the extrinsic religious type.⁹

Building on the work of Allport and moving beyond his narrow concept of utilitarianism, Allen and Spilka investigated five characteristics of religious thought: content, clarity, complexity, flexibility, and importance.¹⁰ On the basis of their studies they concluded that there are two religious types: the consensual and the committed. The first, who tends to be more prejudiced than the second, is described as a person whose religious beliefs are held in unthinking conformity with his social group. He demonstrates a reliance on the concrete, tangible, and impersonal in religion. His religion has little saliency to his daily life. The religion of the committed religious type, conversely, is personally authentic and is salient to his daily activities. It is more abstract, open and flexible than that of the consensual religious person.

⁹Robert C.L. Brannon, "Gimme That Old-Time Racism," Psychology Today, III: 11 (1970), 42-44; John R. Tisdale, "Selected Correlates of Extrinsic Religious Values," Review of Religious Research, VII: 2 (1966), 78-84; Joe R. Feagin, "Prejudice and Religious Types: A Focused Study of Southern Fundamentalists," Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, IV: 1 (1964), 3-13; W. Cody Wilson, "Extrinsic Religious Values and Prejudice," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, LX: 2 (1960), 286-291.

¹⁰Russell O. Allen, "Religion and Prejudice: An Attempt to Clarify the Patterns of Relationship" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Denver, 1965); Russell O. Allen and Bernard Spilka, "Committed and Consensual Religion: A Specification of Religion-Prejudice Relationships," Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, VI: 2 (1967) 191-206.

Allen and Spilka see the difference between the two types as one of style:

The committed orientation, on the one hand, reflects an emphasis on the abstract, relational qualities of religious belief which tend to be nonambiguous, well differentiated or multiplex, and diversity tolerant. It would also involve a personal devotional commitment to religious values which suffuse daily activities. The consensual orientation, on the other hand, reflects an emphasis on the concrete, literal qualities of religious belief which tend to be vague and global, nondifferentiated and bifurcated, relatively restrictive and diversity intolerant. It would also involve a detached or neutralized, magical or possible vestigial commitment to religious values.¹¹

They also found that committed religious persons tend to consider themselves more religious than the consensual type and tend to have a more positive view of self and the world than does the latter type.¹² Moreover, Spilka concludes that the two religious types also reflect two personality types.¹³

In a 1972 study of 4745 Lutherans, Strommen, et. al. obtained results which confirm those of Allen and Spilka.¹⁴ Labeling the two types the "Gospel Orientation" (committed) and the "Law Orientation" (consensual), they concluded that the first is characterized by a belief in salvation by faith, a valuing of the transcendent dimension of life, a knowledge of a personal caring God, a fair certainty of faith,

¹¹Allen, "Religion and Prejudice," p. 14.

¹²Allen and Spilka, "Committed and Consensual Religion," pp. 203-204.

¹³Bernard Spilka and Paul H. Werme, "Religion and Mental Disorder: A Research Perspective," in Merton P. Strommen (ed.) Research on Religious Development (New York: Hawthorn, 1971), p. 465.

¹⁴Merton P. Strommen, et al., A Study of Generations (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1972).

a biblical orientation, and a positive attitude toward life and death.¹⁵ The person with a law orientation is characterized by a belief in salvation by works, a dependence on external structures, rigidity, absolutism, the exploitation of religion and society for satisfaction of personal needs, external conformity to consensual morality, and attitudes of prejudice toward other persons.¹⁶ Strommen, too, sees a correlation between these religious types and general personality types.

Delineating Characteristics

What emerges from these studies are at least five criteria which can be used to differentiate between the two types. These are: (1) the extent to which the person has integrated his personal religion and his cultural religion, (2) the saliency of his cultural religious beliefs for other beliefs and behavior, (3) the degree of rigidity or flexibility of the religious beliefs, (4) the quality of the world view of the person, and (5) the general rigidity or flexibility of the individual's personality.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 100.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 150.

The Sources of Belief. Before expanding on these criteria, it is important to clarify what is meant by personal and cultural religion. A basic theoretical assumption of this paper is that man has two religions. His personal religion is his actual religious perspective formulated on the basis of his personal experience with the ultimate conditions of his life. Cultural religion is the religious perspective of a social group which holds forth the standards of the right way to experience, think about, and practice religion. My contention is that the religion of any individual, and his God-concept, contains both of these dimensions. This is particularly true of religious beliefs.

I make this assertion for several reasons. First, our beliefs about reality are formulated both on the basis of our personal experience with reality, i.e. direct experience with the object of belief, or on the basis of the perceptions and authority of others, i.e. beliefs derived from external authority rather than from direct experience with the object of belief.¹⁷ Both experiential and derived beliefs are necessary for us, insofar as is possible, to have a complete and accurate picture of the world and our place in it. The religious view of the world is no different from other beliefs in this respect. It is formulated from actual experience with reality and from the socio-cultural religious ideology of a person's social groups.

¹⁷Milton Rokeach, Beliefs, Attitudes, and Values (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1968), p. 10.

It could be said, of course, that all religion has a cultural origin since man is not born with a religion or a concept of God. Society serves as the repository of the symbols and practices of the religious perspective.¹⁸ However, the individual has his own personal experiences with the ultimate conditions of his life. He appropriates the religion of his culture to fit this experience, shaping the cultural perspective to fit his own experience and shaping his own perspective to fit that of his social group.

Piaget calls this the reciprocal process of "assimilation" and accommodation."¹⁹ Respectively, these mean the incorporation of reality data by modifying it to fit the personal perspective, and the modification of the personal perspective to fit reality.²⁰ In the social sense "assimilation" means that the individual modifies the point of view of his social group to fit his personal understanding of reality, and "accommodation" means that he alters his perceptions and concepts in order to "subordinate himself to the precepts and demands of the group."²¹

¹⁸Robert N. Bellah, Beyond Belief (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), pp. 261-262.

¹⁹Jean Piaget and Barbel Inhelder, The Psychology of the Child (New York: Basic, 1969), pp. 5-6.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Jean Piaget, The Construction of Reality in the Child (New York: Basic, 1954), p. 361.

Hopefully, this process is marked by the qualities of differentiation and integration so that the individual achieves a meaningful, integrated religious perspective. If he does not achieve this, it can be said that he has two religions: a cultural religion and a personal religion. On the same basis it can be said that he has two God-concepts: a personal God-concept and a cultural God-concept.

Integration. The empirical evidence makes it clear that the consensual religious person has not integrated his personal religion and his cultural religion. The term "consensual" means a surface conformity to a socio-cultural religious perspective. The reason he appears to use his religion in a "utilitarian" way is that he has not integrated the cultural religious perspective with his personal religious perspective. There is a split between his cultural religion and the way he really sees ultimate reality. As I will clarify in Chapter IV, he also holds two God-concepts which are unintegrated and undifferentiated. The committed religious person, on the other hand, has an integrated, religious perspective in which the cultural and personal factors are brought together in an integrated two dimensional system of beliefs and practices.

Centrality of Belief. A second differentiating characteristic of the two types is that the cultural and personal religious beliefs of the consensual person tend to lack saliency or centrality for his other beliefs and behavior, while the integrated religion of the committed person occupies the center of his self and world perspective.

By centrality I mean the degree of connectedness a belief or a belief system has to other beliefs and belief systems. Rokeach writes:

"The more a given belief is functionally connected or in communication with other beliefs, the more implications and consequences it has for other beliefs, and therefore the more central the belief."²² Consequently, a central belief is one which has a high degree of influence on other beliefs and behavior, has a high degree of resistance to change, and if changed, has relatively greater effects on other beliefs and behavior than would less central beliefs.²³

It is apparent that the cultural and personal religious beliefs of the consensual person tend to not have a broad influence on his other beliefs and behavior. Allport has pointed out that this type seems to shape his religious beliefs to fit other beliefs.²⁴ While his religious beliefs may be extremely important to him in certain situations, they tend to be peripheral in his belief system.²⁵ Conversely, the religious beliefs of the committed religious person occupy the center of his belief system.

²²Rokeach, p. 5.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Allport and Ross, p. 434.

²⁵Allport, "The Religious Context of Prejudice," p. 84.

This discussion is not meant to imply that the consensual religious person's cultural and personal religious beliefs are unimportant to him. They are, as we shall see in regards to the God-concepts, extremely important to him at times. Peripheral beliefs may be intensely held and be extremely important to the individual in specific situations.²⁶

Wholeness and Totality. A third differentiating criteria is the degree of rigidity or flexibility of the person's religious beliefs. By rigidity I mean what Erikson calls a "totality,"

"...a Gestalt in which an absolute boundary is emphasized: giving a certain arbitrary delineation, nothing that belongs inside must be let outside, nothing that must be outside can be tolerated inside."²⁷

By flexibility I mean what Erikson calls a "wholeness," "...a sound organic, progressive mutuality between diversified functions and parts within an entirety, the boundaries of which are open and fluid."²⁸ Rigidity therefore refers to a closedness to new experience, an intolerance to opposing points of view, and a resistance to change. Flexibility refers to an openness to new experience, a tolerance of opposing points of view, and a willingness to change. In many respects these are correlative to Rokeach's understanding of closed and open belief systems.²⁹

²⁶Rokeach, p. 14.

²⁷Erik H. Erikson, Identity: Youth and Crisis (New York: Norton, 1968), p. 81.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 80-81.

²⁹Milton Rokeach, The Open and Closed Mind (N.Y.: Basic, 1960).

The research presented above convincingly shows that the religious belief system of the consensual type tends to be rigid and closed, while that of the committed type can be characterized as flexible and open. Consequently, it can be said that the religion of the consensual type is a totality and that of the committed type a wholeness.

This is an important point for the way a person holds his religious beliefs is just as important, if not more important, than the content of belief in determining their function in the believer's personality. Rokeach has presented convincing evidence of this.³⁰

Harvey takes a similar position in his development of a theory of the relationship of conceptualization and personality development.³¹ Accordingly, a person can hold either liberal or fundamental religious beliefs and still be a consensual religious person, or, conversely, a committed religious person.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹O.J. Harvey, David E. Hunt, and Harold M. Schroder, Conceptual Systems and Personality Organization (New York: Wiley, 1961), pp. 1-2.

World View. A fourth difference between the committed and consensual religious types is that the first tends to have a positive view of the world and the second a negative view. As was stated above, Allen and Spilka discovered that the consensual type tends to view the world as an unsafe and undependable place and other persons as untrustworthy, while the committed type views the world and other persons as trustworthy and dependable.³²

Personality Orientation. The fifth differentiating factor is the difference in the general personality orientations of the two types. The picture that emerges of the personality of the consensual type is one of rigidity, closedness, defensiveness, dependency, and low self-esteem. In summarizing research and theory concerning the personality of the consensual religious person, Dittes offers the following composite, theoretical picture of his personality:

"(a) A person threatened or overwhelmed by one or another external circumstance or internal impulse; (b) a person therefore responsive to and reliant upon controls, structures, self-supports, and identity clues, especially as these may be provided externally, clearly unambiguously; (c) thus a person possessing a wider range of characteristics serving the latter function, including those described as suggestibility, rigidity, intolerance of ambiguity, need for definiteness, closure seeking, manipulativeness, reliance on social or institutional or other authorities, moralism and other conventional indices of a severe superego."³³

³² Allen and Spilka, pp. 203-205.

³³ James E. Dittes, "Religion, Prejudice, and Personality," in Strommen, p. 364.

In short, the consensual religious person tends to have a personality that could be described as totalistic in nature.

The implication of this for the proposed model is that the consensual religious person has achieved a totalistic solution to the identity crisis. He is a conflicted, alienated person who depends on others to give him an identity.

On the other hand, the committed religious person has an integrated, flexible, mature personality. He has a deep sense of his own worthfulness. He has achieved a wholistic, positive sense of identity.

Summary. In summary, the consensual religious person is one who has not integrated his personal and cultural religion, whose religious beliefs occupy a peripheral position to his other beliefs, who holds a negative world view, and whose religion and personality are totalistic in nature. The committed religious person is, on the other hand, one who has integrated his cultural and personal religious perspectives, who has placed his religious beliefs at the center of his total belief system, and whose religion and personality can be characterized as wholistic in nature.

It should be recognized at this point that these are ideal types. I am referring to religious and personality orientations. No person is totally closed nor totally open in regards to religious belief systems and personality orientations. However, there are people whose religious orientations and personality orientations tend to be more like that of the consensual type and those which tend to be more like that of the committed type.

Other Religious Types

I do not take the position in this paper that there are only two religious types. These two are the most obvious in the research literature, but there are probably others.³⁴ For example, it seems possible that there may be people who have a general wholistic personality orientation, but who have a rigid, extremely peripheral religious perspective. Such a person might be called a "nominally religious person." More theoretical work and finer differentiation of categories needs to be done by the empirical researchers of religion, but this task is beyond the scope of this paper. The primary concern here is the consensual religious person.

IV. DEFINITIONS

Religion

By religion I mean the beliefs, experiences, and behavior which relate individuals and groups to those aspects of their lives which they perceive as ultimate reality and define in terms of a non-empirical reality which is usually symbolized as God.

As a perception of ultimate reality religion is a superordinate framework of orientation, a cosmic order of ultimate meaning and value

³⁴Spilka and Werme, p. 475.

which stands above the order and purpose of the commonplace world, evaluating and justifying it. In terms of meaning it tells a man who he is in relationship to the universe, justifying his existence and outlining the broad parameters of that existence. It reduced the complexities, ambiguities, and paradoxes of life to an understandable whole which enables the individual to make sense of the world and his life in it. Benda has stated "that life without meaning is not worth living and that each individual strives toward being devoted and dedicated to something greater than himself."³⁵ Religion is that which provides a cosmic framework of orientation for this basic human need.

If religion tells a person who he is in relationship to the universe, it also tells him how to relate to it. To be devoted to something means having a set of values to guide one's behavior and direction. Religion serves as the court of last resort to judge and confirm the moral choices made by men and societies. As Benda writes:

"Religion must be viewed as man's most fundamental endeavor to organize human morality in a way that not only covers temporary laws and conveniences, codes and customs, but makes man a being who thinks and acts in human terms rather than as a specific nation, tribe, or creed."³⁶

In this respect religion is a superordinate value system.

There are of course many superordinate systems of meaning and value, e.g. communism, nationalism, and scienticism, that command the devotion of individuals and groups. We may therefore say, "Nationalism

³⁵ Clemens E. Benda, "The Existential Approach to Religion," in E.M. Mansell Pattison (ed.) Clinical Psychiatry and Religion (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969), p. 43.

³⁶ Ibid, p. 42.

is that man's religion." However, I hold that what differentiates religion from other ideologies is that it is a worldview concerned with a supernatural reality. A superordinate system of orientation becomes religious only when its referrent object is nonempirical.³⁷

Religion, then, is a superordinate system of orientation which includes a conception of a Divine, nonempirical reality that transcends the empirical reality of time and space. Because the Divine is usually symbolized as God, I will use this term to describe the nonempirical referrent object of religion.

God-Concept

By God-concept I mean a relatively enduring organization of beliefs around the object of a nonempirical reality which is called God predisposing the believer to respond in some preferential manner. Here I am following Rokeach's definition of an attitude. "An attitude is a relatively enduring organization of beliefs around an object or situation predisposing one to respond in some preferential manner."³⁸

There are several aspects of this definition which need to be expanded. First, the God-concept is something more than the assertion of God's existence. It is an organization of many different beliefs

³⁷Bellah, p. 262.

³⁸Rokeach, Beliefs, Attitudes, and Values, p. 112.

about God. Glock, for example, suggests that the God-concept is a complex of warranting beliefs, purposive beliefs, and implementing beliefs which, respectively, affirm the existence and nature, the purposes, and the expectations of God.³⁹

Second, by following Rokeach's definition of an attitude I am holding that a person's beliefs about God are something more than mere intellectual assertions about the nature of God and his activity in the world. Rokeach points out that every belief contains an affective and a behavioral component as well as a cognitive one.⁴⁰ The affective component is a positive or negative feeling about the object of belief, both in terms of whether or not it is good or bad and liked or disliked.⁴¹ The behavioral component is "a predisposition to respond," either verbally or through nonverbal behavior, and in a variety of possible ways when the belief is activated by the object of belief or a particular situation.⁴² It can therefore be said that a person has an emotional and behavioral investment in his God-concept. Of course the degree of importance of this investment depends on the degree of centrality of the God-concept.

³⁹Charles Y. Glock, "On the Study of Religious Commitment," Research Supplement to Religious Education, LVII: 4 (1962), p. 101.

⁴⁰Rokeach, Beliefs, Attitudes, and Values, pp. 115-122.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, p. 121.

⁴²*Ibid.*, pp. 120-121.

Implicit in this is the fact that the God-concept is a relational term. All concepts are statements about self in relationship to particular aspects of reality.⁴³ In this respect the God-concept of any person is an identity statement for it describes the way he defines himself in relation to that object of belief called God.

Finally, because the God-concept concerns a nonempirical reality, its formation is dependent on the basis of the projection of human relationships and experiences. Robert Bellah states it this way:

"A point of great importance about religious symbol systems is that the symbolization of its existential referent cannot be derived from its inherent quality since it is nonempirical, but must be projected on the basis of some aspects of empirical reality."⁴⁴

In short, individuals and societies can only describe God and their relationship with him on the basis of their experience in finite reality.

What is projected? In general what is projected are the essential qualities of existence which individuals and societies perceive as having ultimate meaning and value. While almost anything on the face of the earth can be perceived in this way, at its core the God-concept is rooted from the social perspective in those values which define the structure of a society, and from the individual perspective in the depths and heights of significant human relationships. Consequently, Bellah writes that "the key aspects usually projected are the structure of macroscopic society and a stage or stages of the socialization process."⁴⁵

⁴³Harvey, Hunt, and Schroder, p. 67.

⁴⁴Bellah, p. 263. ⁴⁵Ibid.

A basic assumption of this paper is that the qualities projected to God and the values which are seen to derive from God's authority have their foundations in the significant relationships of the psychosocial process of development as this is understood by Erik Erikson. I will return to this point in the next chapter.

The Cultural God-Concept

The cultural God-concept, reflecting a person's accommodation to a social group's concept of God, is an image of the way God should be perceived, experienced, and related to by the believer. This definition will be explained in Chapter IV.

The Personal God-Concept

The personal God-concept, reflecting a person's assimilation of a social group's concept of God, is a projection of the believer's perception of his experiences with the ultimate conditions of his life. This will be dealt with further in Chapter IV.

Identity

Identity, as it will be understood in this paper, is a coherent sense of self, characterized by a sense of unique sameness and continuity in time and space, of mastery of one's internal processes and external events, of commitment to a meaningful future, and an inner assuredness that others affirm this sense of self. This definition will be explained in the next chapter.

Alienated Identity

An alienated identity is a totalistic illusory identity which a person seeks outside himself in the behavior and opinions of others. This definition is the subject of Chapter III.

Negative Self-Image

A negative self-image is a usually unconscious image of self as being a helpless, bad person who has to depend on others for his sense of identity. This definition will be discussed in Chapter III.

V. THE MODEL

The model of the relationship of God-concept to identity in the consensual religious person will contain four basic components: the alienated identity, the negative self-image, a relatively positive cultural God-concept, and a negative personal God-concept. My hypothesis is that the personality of the consensual religious person is characterized by an alienated identity and a negative self-image, both of which reflect his alienation from his inherent strength to be a living growing person in the process of becoming. Moreover, I will hold that the consensual religious person has failed to differentiate and integrate the cultural and personal God-concepts. The first is a relatively positive view of God reflecting the consensual type's accommodation to the cultural ideal of the nature of God. The second is a negative image reflecting the consensual person's negative world view in general and his negative relationship with condemning, judging parents.

Utilizing these four components, I will build a two dimensional model: the alienated identity - cultural God-concept dimension and the negative self-image - personal God-concept dimension. This particular configuration is based on the premise that the cultural God-concept functions primarily in relationship to the alienated identity and that the personal God-concept functions primarily in relationship to the negative self-image.

Because this dissertation is being written in the context of a pastoral counseling orientation, I will seek in the final chapter to relate the model and my understanding of identity to the theological understanding of faith and revelation. I will hold that there is a correlation between the psychological understanding of positive identity and the theological understanding of faith. Moreover, I will posit that there is a correlation between therapeutic awareness as understood by Gestalt therapy and revelation as understood by theology. The basic premise will be that the healing of the God-man relationship can be an outgrowth of the healing of psychological conflicts in therapy.

VI. METHODOLOGY

This is a correlative study relating existing personality theory to relevant empirical research in the field of religion and personality. Erik Erikson's understanding of identity and the life cycle will provide the theoretical foundation for the model, although other theorists will be drawn on when necessary. Erikson's model of the life cycle and identity will be presented in Chapter II.

In Chapter III I will develop an understanding of the alienated identity and the negative self-image and their function in the personality.

The model of the relationship of God-concepts to identity will be constructed in Chapter IV. To examine the dynamics of the two dimensions I will utilize Katz's model of the four functions of attitudes in the personality. These four functions, as Katz defines them, are

- "1. The instrumental, adjustive, or utilitarian function upon which Jeremy Bentham and the utilitarians constructed their model of man. A modern expression of this approach can be found in behavioristic learning theory.

2. The ego-defensive function in which the person protects himself from acknowledging the basic truths about himself or the harsh realities in his external world. Freudian psychology and neo-Freudian thinking have been preoccupied with this type of motivation and its outcomes.

3. The value-expressive function in which the individual derives satisfactions from expressing attitudes appropriate to his personal values and to his concept of himself. This function is central to doctrines of ego psychology which stress the importance of self-expression, self-development, and self-realization.

4. The knowledge function based upon the individual's need to give adequate structure to his universe. The search for meaning, the need to understand, the trend toward better organization of perceptions and beliefs to provide clarity and consistency for the individual are other descriptions of this function. The development of principles about perceptual and cognitive structure have been the contribution of Gestalt psychology."⁴⁶

Case studies will be utilized to provide clarification of the discussion. These will not be considered proofs, but are intended to provide illustration of important points.

As has already been stated, Chapter V will consider psychological and theological correlations and their significance for pastoral counseling.

VII. DELIMITATIONS

The aim of this paper is to develop the basic structure of a model of the relationship of God-concept to identity in the consensual religious person. The scope therefore is limited to developing the broad parameters of the model. Consequently, I will make no attempt to consider the following subjects.

First, I will not consider all of the many complex elements, e.g. religious practices, emotions, and behavior, which comprise religion. Although some of these elements will be alluded to, this is not a comprehensive model of religion.

⁴⁶D. Katz, "The Functional Approach to the Study of Attitudes," Public Opinion Quarterly, XXIV: 1 (1960), 170.

Second, I will not examine the myriad of religious beliefs, or for that matter the many different beliefs about God. I am primarily concerned with the positive or negative quality of the person's God-concept and the way that quality contributes to self-definition.

Third, the discussion will concentrate on one religious type which has been clearly identified in the religious literature. Other types will not be considered, although comparisons will be made with the committed religious person.

Fourth, subtypes of the consensual religious type will not be delineated, although I acknowledge that there are subtypes. The stages of the psychosocial life cycle might provide a useful means for identifying subtypes, but this task would require in itself a lengthy paper.

VIII. VALUE OF STUDY

This study is deemed to be significant for the following reasons. First, there is a need for a sound theoretical base on which to do empirical research in the area of personality and religion. For example, a considerable body of research has attempted to link a constricted personality type to a conservative religious commitment.⁴⁷ This research has proven to be inconclusive and contradictory partially because much of it has been a helter-skelter gathering of information

⁴⁷ Mark K. Allen, "Personality and Cultural Factors Related to Religious Authoritarianism" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, Stanford University, 1955); Ralph M. Dreger, "Some Personality Correlates of Religious Attitudes as Determined by Projective Techniques," Psychological Monographs, LXVI: 3 (1952); W. Edgar Gregory, "The Orthodoxy of the Authoritarian Personality," Journal of Social Psychology, XLV: 2 (1957), 217-232; Marshall B. Jones, "Religious Values and Authoritarian Tendency," Journal of Social Psychology, XLVIII: 3 (1958), 83-89; E.T. Prothro and J.A. Jensen, "Inter-relations of Religious and Ethnic Attitudes in Selected Southern Populations," Journal of Social Psychology, XXXII: 1 (1950), 45-49; Snell Putney and Russell Middleton, "Dimensions and Correlates of Religious Ideologies," Social Forces, IIIIX: 4 (1961), 285-290; James G. Ranck, "Some Personality Correlates of Religious Attitude and Belief" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, Columbia University, 1955); James G. Ranck, "Religious Conservatism-Liberalism and Mental Health," Pastoral Psychology, XII: 112 (1961), 34-40; Gordon Stanley, "Personality and Attitude Correlates of Religious Belief, Degree of Prejudice and Perceived Parent-Child Rearing Practices" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Denver, 1963); J. Weima, "Authoritarianism, Religious Conservatism, and Socio-centric Attitudes in Roman Catholic Groups," Human Relations, XVIII: 3 (1965), 231-239.

and has lacked a sound theoretical foundation.⁴⁸ It is hoped the model of this paper will provide a theoretical base for future empirical research.

Second, research and theory on the consensual religious person has tended to concentrate on the conforming nature of the religion of the consensual type. In positing a personal God-concept I am asserting that the God-concept of the consensual type has more personal significance for the believer than is generally acknowledged. I am suggesting that researchers need to consider this personal dimension if they are to have a comprehensive understanding of the function of the belief in God in the personality of the consensual religious type.

Third, there are a great many people in our churches who are consensually religious. It is hoped that this paper will provide a deeper understanding of the function of the belief in God in the consensual religious person for the pastor and pastoral counselor who must deal with this type day after day.

⁴⁸ Bernard Spilka, "Research on Religious Beliefs: A Critical Review," in Strommen, p. 496; Rodney Stark, "Psychopathology and Religious Commitment," Review of Religious Research, XII: 3 (1971), 165-175.

CHAPTER II

ERIKSON'S CONCEPT OF IDENTITY

In recent years identity has come into wide usage as a psychological construct as Edson and Thayer have shown.¹ Among the many writers on identity, Erik Erikson has conducted the most systematic study and provided the most comprehensive theory of identity. Integrating his understanding of identity into his ego psychology, he has made it a central concept in his theory of the developmental life cycle.

In this chapter I will summarize Erikson's theory of the life cycle, his concept of identity, and his understanding of the function of religion in the personality.

I: THE LIFE CYCLE

General Theory

To understand Erikson's concept of identity it is necessary to place it in the context of his theory of the life cycle, for identity is not a thing in and of itself. It is integrally related to the

¹W. Doyle Edson, "An Analysis of Identity From the Standpoint of Erikson, Freud, Kroehler, and Tillich" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, Claremont Graduate School, 1968), pp. 1-6; Lee O. Thayer, "Identity: A Conceptual, Empirical, and Methodological Study" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1963), pp. 1-4.

developmental stages, having its foundations in the childhood stages, emerging as a developmental task at adolescence, and growing and expanding in adult life.

Erikson conceives of the totality of man's life in terms of an evolutionary eight stage life cycle. Building on and extending Freud's theory of psychosexual development, Erikson views each of the stages as psychosocial developmental crises which are "decisive turning points" for the individual in regards to his ability to cope with internal drives and the world in an individually and socially satisfactory way.²

The terms "psychosocial" is derived from two basic assumptions Erikson makes about development. First, he holds that the personality develops in steps predetermined in the individual, steps that are expressed in the "growing person's readiness to be driven toward, to be aware of, and to interact with a widening social radius."³ Building on the biological epigenetic principle, Erikson's thesis is that every human being is born with a developmental ground plan that determines eight developmental tasks that will arise at a specified time, calling forth from the individual a decision concerning the way he

²Erik H. Erikson, Insight and Responsibility (New York: Norton, 1964), pp. 138-139.

³Erik H. Erikson, Childhood and Society (2d ed.; New York: Norton, 1963), pp. 92-93.

experiences himself and his relationship to his environment.⁴ This ground plan is rooted in biological drives and the individual's expanding physical capacity to relate to his environment. Consequently, the first five stages of psychosocial development are rooted in Freud's psychosexual developmental stages.

The second underlying assumption is that every human personality grows in a social setting that is so designed to match up with, affirm, and utilize the emerging interaction potentialities of the developing individual.⁵ The family and society are so constituted as to expect and affirm the task which the child has to accomplish at each stage of childhood. Society is vitally interested and involved in the process. It can therefore be said that for Erikson the personality develops according to a life plan of emerging interaction potentialities which tend to be elicited and affirmed at the proper time by the individual's society.

At this point Erikson moves beyond Freud. Where Freud saw personality formation primarily as a product of the individual-parent matrix, Erikson views it as the product of the interaction of the individual with his parents within the context of the family and with a wider social setting within the framework of the family's heritage.⁶

⁴Erik H. Erikson, Identity: Youth and Crisis (New York: Norton, 1968), pp. 92-93.

⁵Erikson, Childhood and Society, p. 270.

⁶Erikson, Identity: Youth and Crisis, pp. 22-23.

Erikson maintains that man is dependent on his society for his development. Lacking the developed instincts of the animal, it is necessary for the human being to assemble, give meaning to, and organize his drive fragments during the long period of childhood through the processes of childrearing and schooling.⁷ Man is born neither a social creature nor an asocial creature, but is born viable, that is he comes into the world with a potentiality for socialization. This potential and his personal idiosyncrasies come together with society in the developmental process to form individual capacities for social interaction.

Growth for Erikson is the synthesizing of internal factors (impulses, needs, desires, hereditary givens) with external factors (parental and societal expectations and affirmations). Erikson thus puts great emphasis on the ego's synthesizing function in developing stable conceptions of self in relationship to the world.⁸ Here he moves beyond Freud who concentrated his theory on the drive of id impulses to find satisfaction and their control by social and environmental forces. Like Hartmann,⁹ Erikson sees the ego developing

⁷Erikson, Childhood and Society, p. 95.

⁸Ibid., pp. 193-194.

⁹Heinz Hartmann, Ego Psychology and the Problem of Adaptation (New York: International Universities Press, 1958), pp. 3-21.

functions which are autonomous from the id-ego-superego matrix.¹⁰ The individual, consequently, is not only motivated by id impulses or superego demands, but also by the psychosocial strengths which he develops in the psychosocial life stages. This is a process of growth which brings the individual and society together in an interdependent relationship in the ego, a growth that is a process of ever expanding capacities of the ego to relate to an ever expanding social reality.¹¹

Personality for Erikson, then, can be viewed as a two dimensional process of "becoming." A person does not have a personality. He is always in the process of developing it. On a longitudinal dimension the process can be viewed as a lifelong series of actualizations of inborn potentialities. On a horizontal dimension it can be viewed as an individual-societal interaction resulting in an expanding ability to relate to one's society and environment.

The Eight Stages

As has been indicated Erikson sees this process occurring in eight developmental stages, each one of which confronts the individual with a specific developmental task. Although each task emerges at a

¹⁰Erikson, Childhood and Society, pp. 189-194.

¹¹Erikson, Identity: Youth and Crisis, pp. 95-96.

specified time in the life cycle they are all interrelated.¹² What happens in preceding stages affects the outcome of succeeding stages. Moreover, each task is present from the very beginning of growth, emerging at its proper time to become normative for its developmental stage. It is also important that the task emerge at its proper time and in its proper sequence. If it does not, then there can be pathological results.

These normative crises of the eight developmental stages, listed in order of their emergence in the life cycle, are:

- I: Basic Trust vs. Mistrust
- II: Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt
- III: Initiative vs. Guilt
- IV: Industry vs. Inferiority
- V: Identity vs. Identity Confusion
- VI: Intimacy vs. Isolation
- VII: Generativity vs. Stagnation
- VIII: Integrity vs. Despair

With the emergence of each stage the individual is confronted with a decisive turning point in his life. If development is to progress unimpaired, he must achieve a "sense of" a realistic and healthy balance in which the positive pole of the normative crises, e.g. basic trust, predominates over the negative pole.¹³ By "sense of" Erikson means "an inner state" that "pervades surface and depth," including the unconscious and the conscious, and which reflects itself to others through behavior.¹⁴ Both a "sense of" the positive and the negative pole are developed in their normative stage. The crucial issue is whether a positive or a negative balance is attained.

¹²Erikson, Childhood and Society, p. 271.

¹³Ibid., pp. 273-274. ¹⁴Ibid., p. 251.

If a positive result is accomplished the individual gains a psychosocial strength which is experienced as a sense of wellbeing, a sense of rightness about oneself and the world. It is a psychosocial strength because it is a statement about self, the world, and self in relationship to the world. For example, the development of basic trust, the psychosocial strength of the first stage of development, is a statement about one's biological urges being trustworthy, about the environment being trustworthy, and about significant others recognizing one as trustworthy.

It is extremely important to remember that the accomplishment of the positive pole does not eliminate the negative pole. The goal is to achieve a realistic and healthy balance in which the positive pole, e.g. basic trust, predominates over the negative pole, e.g. mistrust.¹⁵ The negative pole remains a dynamic counterpart of the positive throughout life.

This is a significant point, for inherent to the life cycle is the development of a sense of alienation or "estrangement."¹⁶ Each stage brings with it a particular kind of alienation which will remain with the person throughout his life. Man is faced throughout life with the foreboding threat that the gains he has made will be overcome, that his wholeness will be taken away. The potential is thus present in every human being to regress temporarily to a negative

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 273-274.

¹⁶ Erikson, Identity: Youth and Crisis, p. 105.

solution in times of intense crisis. Erikson writes, "Every tired human being may regress temporarily to partial mistrust whenever the world of his expectations has been shaken to the core."¹⁷

One of the elements of personality which enables a person to come back from such a setback is the "virtue," or "quality of strength" developed in each stage of the life cycle.¹⁸ Erikson holds that in each stage a quality of the psychosocial strength of that stage is developed, standing behind that strength giving it an "active quality."¹⁹ For example, "hope," the virtue which grows out of the first stage sustains life, "even where confidence is wounded, trust impaired."²⁰ The basic virtues for each stage from first to last are respectively hope, will, purpose, competence, fidelity, love, care, and wisdom.²¹

These virtues are also seen as capacities for ethical action by men and societies. Through the ego, sustained by these active qualities of its synthesizing powers, come together the values which

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 82-83.

¹⁸ Erikson, Insight and Responsibility, p. 113.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 115.

²¹ Ibid., pp. 115-134.

individuals and societies need in order to live together. Thus, the basic virtues "seem to provide a test for universal values and to contain the promise of a possible morality which is self-corrective as it remains adaptive."²²

Erikson also holds that there is a societal institution which safeguards each psychosocial strength. He bases this assertion on his observation that human life cycles and human institutions evolve together, each generation seeking satisfaction for remnants of infantile needs and each institution reinforcing the "childlike vitality" of these needs.²³ The institutions which exist in society to confirm the developmental stages from the first stage to last are respectively religion, law and order, the economic ethos, the technological ethos, ideology, marriage, all institutions, and religion and philosophy.

Another dynamic which emerges in the developmental stages of childhood is a growing sense of identity. Although identity has its normative crisis in adolescence, its formulation begins in the first stage of development with each successive childhood stage contributing

²²Erik H. Erikson, "The Roots of Virtue," in Julian Huxley (ed.) The Humanist Frame (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), cited by E. Mansell Pattison, "Morality, Guilt, Forgiveness in Psychotherapy," in his Clinical Psychiatry and Religion (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969), p. 103.

²³Erikson, Identity: Youth and Crisis, pp. 105-106.

a new and differentiated quality to it.²⁴ These contributions for each stage are listed in column VI of the chart on page 33.

On this chart are listed the dimensions of the developmental stages which have been discussed here. A column is also included for the psychosexual stages of development so that the reader can see their relationship to the psychosocial stages.

In this section I have given a brief overview of Erikson's understanding of the development of personality and his theory of the developmental life cycle. I have not explored the dynamics of the individual stages because it is not necessary for the purposes of this paper.

II. IDENTITY

The Identity Crisis

Identity as an issue of the life cycle has its normative crisis in adolescence. It is essential that identity be formed at this time because the individual is moving from childhood to adulthood. Consequently, he must do those things necessary to prepare him to have an interdependent, mature relationship with the adult world. The identity crisis arises out of the rapid physical growth of adolescence, the emergence of dormant sublimated psychosexual drives, and the development of adult powers of comprehension and cognition.²⁵

²⁴Ibid., p. 105.

²⁵Ibid., p. 242.

DIMENSIONS OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES

I	IX	III	IV	V	VI
Psychosocial Stage	Psychosexual Stage	Estrangement	Virtue	Institution	Identity Gain
Basic Trust vs. Mistrust	Oral	Abandonment	Hope	Religion	I am what I hope I have and give.
Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt	Anal	Shame and Self-Doubt	Will	Law and Order	I am what I can will freely.
Initiative vs. Guilt	Genital	Guilt	Purpose	Economic Ethos	I am what I can imagine I'll be.
Industry vs. Inferiority	Latency	Inferiority	Competence	Technological Ethos	I am what I can do.
Identity vs. Identity Confusion	Adolescence	Identity Confusion	Fidelity	Ideology	
Intimacy vs. Isolation	Young Adult	Isolation	Love	Marriage	
Generativity vs. Stagnation	Middle Age	Stagnation	Care	All Institutions	
Integrity vs. Despair	Old Age	Despair	Wisdom	Religion and Philosophy	

The task to be accomplished at this stage is the integration of the id impulses, superego impulses, significant past identifications, effective defenses, consistent roles, and a meaningful future into a configuration that a person can call his own while having this integration affirmed by his society.²⁶ The formation of identity is thus a task of ego synthesis.²⁷ In order to accomplish this task in our culture, youth need time to search for identity through experimentation with social roles and values. This time may be given to him by society in the psychosocial moratorium.²⁸

Definition

What is the sense of identity that emerges at this stage? It is not easy to arrive at a precise definition of identity as it is conceived of by Erikson. He himself admits to using the term in a wide variety of ways.²⁹ However, I offer the following definition which is a composite of the key elements of identity as presented by Erikson. Identity is a coherent sense of self, characterized by a sense of unique sameness and continuity in time and space, of mastery of one's internal processes and external events, of commitment to a meaningful future, and of an inner assuredness that others affirm this sense of self.

²⁶Erik H. Erikson, "The Problem of Ego Identity," in Maurice R. Stein, Arthur J. Vidich and David White (eds.) Identity and Anxiety (Glencoe, Ill: Free Press, 1960), p. 49.

²⁷Erikson, Identity: Youth and Crisis, p. 162.

²⁸*Ibid.*, p. 157.

²⁹*Ibid.*, p. 208.

Coherency of Self. Identity for Erikson is, first, the feeling of being an integrated unified person, a feeling which is optimally "experienced as a sense of psychosocial wellbeing."³⁰ It is an overall attitude about oneself that permeates the unconscious and the conscious, although it is primarily and usually unconscious, it is an affirmation of the integration of the multiplicity of parts of the personality into a unique coherent whole which forms the "style of one's individuality."³¹ Identity is, as Wheelis states, "a coherent sense of self."³²

Continuity and Sameness. As a coherent sense of personality, identity contains a sense of having continuity and sameness in space and time.³³ This is a sense of being one and the self-same person despite environmental changes. It is the affirmation of the person's "resiliency of maintaining essential patterns in the process of change,"³⁴ and of the inner quality of unique personhood that links what a person was as a child with what he hopes to be as an adult, and that links what a person thinks he is with what others think he is.³⁵ Thus, identity is an integrated sense of knowing where one is, where one has been, and where one is going; a sense characterized by the quality of knowing that throughout the time continuum of the life cycle

³⁰Ibid., p. 165.

³¹Ibid., p. 50.

³²Allen Wheelis, The Quest for Identity (N.Y.: Norton, 1958) p. 19.

³³Erikson, "The Problem of Ego Identity," p. 45.

³⁴Erikson, Insight and Responsibility, p. 96.

³⁵Erikson, "The Problem of Ego Identity," p. 45.

and in relationship with one's society, one's uniqueness was, is, and will be the same despite the vicissitudes of inner and outer change.

In the terms of Erikson's ego psychology, this sense of self-sameness and continuity is based on the experience of the self-sameness and continuity of the ego's synthesizing methods throughout the stages of childhood. Identity is, then, more than a "mere fact of existence;" it is a "quality of this existence," "the style of one's individuality."³⁶

To say that identity is a sense of continuity and sameness in space and time does not mean that it is a static concept of self which never changes. It is a process that has its roots in the first contact of mother and child, becomes increasingly differentiated as the child moves through the psychosocial life stages, has its normative crisis in adolescence, and continues to change and expand through the adult stages of the life cycle.³⁷ Therefore, when I speak of identity as a sense of continuity in time and space, I am not referring to a closed system impervious to change, but to a process in which the "essential features" of individual uniqueness are maintained.³⁸

³⁶Erikson, Identity: Youth and Crisis, p. 50.

³⁷Ibid., p. 23.

³⁸Erikson, Insight and Responsibility, p. 96.

Mastery. To have an identity is not only to have a sense of continuity and self-sameness in the process of change, it is also to have a sense of mastery over that process, to have the feeling that one is in charge of one's life. Erikson refers to this as the "confidence" in "one's ability to maintain an inner sameness and continuity."³⁹

There are several aspects of this sense of mastery which need to be discussed here. First, it is a confidence in the ego's ability to carry out its basic function of synthesizing id, superego, and ego ideal impulses,⁴⁰ a confidence accrued from the experience of the ego's synthesizing work throughout childhood.⁴¹ This is to say that one aspect of the sense of mastery is the confidence that one is not the helpless victim of irrational internal impulses, but that one has the ability to maintain a unique inner sense of cohesiveness.

Second, the sense of mastery is a confidence in the ego's ability to integrate the input of the external environment in a way that the person is able to maintain his sense of individuality while at the same time meeting those social needs which are essential to being a human being.⁴² This is a confidence in the ego's synthesizing

³⁹Erik H. Erikson, Identity and the Life Cycle, (New York: International Universities Press, 1959), p. 89.

⁴⁰Erikson, Identity: Youth and Crisis, p. 211.

⁴¹Erikson, Childhood and Society, p. 261.

⁴²Ibid.

powers on the social frontiers of existence. In this respect the sense of mastery is the feeling that one is able to cope with the twists and turns of external reality in a way that maintains his sense of individual uniqueness and the sameness and continuity of that uniqueness as he relates to and becomes a part of social reality.

Third, the sense of mastery is a feeling of ownership of one's life cycle. To have an identity is to take responsibility for who one has been, who one is, and who one can be.⁴³ It is in identity that past and future come together with the quality of the feeling that one is responsible for the process.

A Meaningful Future. The future comes to identity in the form of a commitment to a personal, occupational, sexual, and ideological future.⁴⁴ Erikson holds that fidelity is the basic virtue developed in the crisis of adolescence. He defines it as "the ability to sustain loyalties freely pledged in spite of the inevitable contradictions of value systems."⁴⁵ With the development of fidelity the youth is able to make a commitment to whom he is to become in the adult world.

It is to a cultural ideology that a person makes his basic commitment. Ideology is essential to identity; they are "two aspects of the same process."⁴⁶ Erikson defines ideology as

⁴³Erikson, Identity: Youth and Crisis, pp. 246-247.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 245.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 125.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 189.

"...a coherent body of shared images, ideas, and ideals which, whether based on a formulated dogma, an implicit Weltanschauung, a highly structured world image, a political creed, or indeed a scientific creed...or a 'way of life,' provides for the participants a coherent, if systematically simplified, over-all orientation in space and time, in means and ends."⁴⁷

Ideology is, then, a meaningful worldview and a value system shared with one's social group.

In an ideology a person finds his niche in his corner of the world. Through a commitment to an ideology, he links his identity with the identities of his society and his past history with the history of his culture, sharing a common identity of meaning and values.

Affirmation of Others. Implied in this last statement is the last element of the definition of identity: "an inner assuredness that others affirm the sense of self." The investment in a shared cultural ideology gives such an assurance, for in an ideology the individual takes on an approved social identity. Identity is, therefore, a product and a dynamic of the psychosocial process, "a process located in the core of the individual and yet also in the core of his communal culture, a process which establishes, in fact, the identity of these two identities."⁴⁸

A person cannot have an identity without the realization that others affirm it. Erikson at one point defines identity as the "acrued confidence that one's ability to maintain an inner sameness and

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 189-190.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 189.

continuity of one's meaning for others."⁴⁹ A person needs to have others see him as he sees himself and see himself as others see him.⁵⁰ He, therefore, seeks to become a part of the larger group identity.

This does not mean, however, that a person is at the mercy of the recognition of others. The self-other tension, or the self-realization - self-objectification tension, as Tabachnick calls it,⁵¹ is conceived by Erikson as being one of "mutuality." He considers mutuality to be an interdependency of relationship characterized by the eliciting of individual strengths.⁵² Identity is, therefore, a sense of self-realization coupled with a mutual affirmation whereby I perceive in others

"hospitality for the way in which my inner world is ordered and includes them, which makes me, in turn, hospitable to the way they order their world and include me - a mutual affirmation then, which can be depended upon to activate my being as I can be depended upon to activate theirs."⁵³

⁴⁹Erikson, "Identity and the Life Cycle," p. 89.

⁵⁰Erikson, Identity: Youth and Crisis, pp. 22-23.

⁵¹Norman Tabachnick, "Three Psychoanalytic Views of Identity," International Journal of Psychoanalysis, XLVI: 4 (1965), 467-468.

⁵²Erikson, Insight and Responsibility, p. 231.

⁵³Erikson, Identity: Youth and Crisis, p. 219.

The alternative to mutuality is "reciprocal negation," which is the perception that others will not take a place in my order and will not let me take a place in theirs.⁵⁴ In other words, reciprocal negation is a sense of alienation between self and other, something that grows out of the identity crisis in the form of identity confusion.

Identity Confusion

The negative polarity of the identity crisis is identity confusion. In the adolescent struggling to find a sense of identity, it may be characterized by a diffusion of the time perspective, extreme self-consciousness, role fixation, bisexual confusion, authority confusion, and/or a confusion of values.⁵⁵ Identity confusion is the result of the failure to synthesize the internal and external factors which need to be synthesized.⁵⁶ A likely consequence of this failure is self-repudiation whereby the individual retains the childhood feeling of being unequally at the mercy of a dominant superego.⁵⁷ He accepts from internalized parental voices the negative self-image of being a helpless, bad person who is dependent on them for his sense of self. Thus, identity confusion can be said to result in a failure to attain a perspective of the world and a system of values which one can call his own. Where a positive sense of identity results in the placing of moral and value choice in the hands of the ego, identity confusion leaves it in the hands of the superego.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 94.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 87.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 89.

In response to identity confusion some people choose a negative identity which is a total identification with that which a person is least supposed to be, an attempt to be what has been presented by parents and society throughout childhood as the most undesirable or dangerous.⁵⁸ For others the decision is to be exactly what others want one to be.⁵⁹ Both reflect an attempt to attain sense of mastery of one's self and one's environment, thereby reflecting an attempt to escape and deny the negative self-image of helplessness and the concomitant voice of the dominant superego.

In both cases the result is the investment in a totalistic view of self and the world. Erikson holds that the identity crisis is the third great crisis of wholeness.⁶⁰ All of the stages can have solutions which may tend to be wholistic or totalistic, but Erikson feels these three stages are the primary determinants of whether or not a person develops or falls back on a wholistic or totalistic ideology.⁶¹

Totalism, in regards to identity, is the attempt to overcome the fear of the loss of identity. Every person needs an identity. The person suffering from identity confusion, hence, a confusion of values, tends to form a "synthetic identity" through commitment to a cultural ideology, the boundaries of which tend to be fixed and hardened to avert the threat of being nothing.⁶²

⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 174-176.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 87.

⁶⁰ Erikson, Identity: Youth and Crisis, p. 87.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 89.

⁶² Ibid., p. 89.

Every person retains throughout life this fear of loss of identity. A positive sense of identity does not mean that the person has eliminated the threat of identity confusion. The achievement of a positive sense of identity means that there is a realistic, healthy balance in which positive identity predominates over identity confusion. For the person who has achieved such a healthy balance, there is then the ever present threat of identity confusion. Moreover, every basic conflict of childhood lives on in the adult as a foreboding sense of estrangement, making its peculiar contribution to the threat of the sense of identity confusion.⁶³ Consequently, even the person with a strong sense of identity can at times and in certain circumstances be overcome by the fear of loss of identity and resort to the totalism of a negative identity and a rigid ideology. In times when an individual is severely threatened by external events, totalism occurs as

"an alternative, if more primitive, way of dealing with experience, and thus has, at least in transitory states, certain adjustment and survival value. It belongs to normal psychology."⁶⁴

Consequently, the resort to a totalistic ideology by a person with a positive sense of identity can be viewed as a defensive move to keep from losing all sense of identity.

⁶³Ibid., pp. 81-82.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 81.

It should be clarified here that no one person has a completely wholistic or a completely totalistic ideology. The picture of a person is always complicated and ambiguous. The person with a positive sense of identity will tend to have a wholistic ideology colored by totalisms. The person experiencing identity confusion will tend to have a totalistic ideology colored by wholisms.

Moreover, a person with a positive sense of identity is able to hold negative self images in a balance where the positive identity predominates. A person experiencing identity confusion has his positive identity submerged or fragmented. In the resolution of identity issues, both poles continue to be co-present. The question is that of the relative predominance and balance as to which side is foremost.

III. RELIGION AND PERSONALITY

Erikson has shown a continuing interest in religion. Defining religion as that which

"elaborates on what feels profoundly true even though it is not demonstrable: it translates into significant words, images, and codes the exceeding darkness which pervades it beyond all desert or comprehension,"⁶⁵

he has sought to understand it in terms of his conceptualization of the life cycle. He has shown particular interest in great men of faith, or "the homo religiousis," and written studies of Luther and Gandhi.⁶⁶

⁶⁵Erik H. Erikson, Young Man Luther (New York: Norton, 1962), pp. 22-23.

⁶⁶Ibid.; Erik H. Erikson, Gandhi's Truth (Norton, 1969).

In Young Man Luther he investigates Luther and the world change he wrought from the perspective of Luther's identity crisis and the ideological crisis of his cultural age. According to Erikson, Luther's religious solution to his identity crisis kindled an earth-shaking ideological change for which his society was ripe.⁶⁷ Through a new religious ideological formulation which changed the course of history, Luther forged his identity as the developmental crises of basic trust and integrity merged in his identity crisis, a combination which Erikson holds to be characteristic for great men of religion.⁶⁸ From Erikson's perspective, then, religion is integrally related with identity, ideology and the life cycle.

As an ideology, Erikson views religion as a system of projections of the fundamental crises of the life cycle and the values of the social order to a cosmic order.⁶⁹ In this respect his theory has similarities to that of Freud who viewed religion as the projection of "the strongest and most urgent wishes of mankind."⁷⁰ However, Erikson differs from Freud on several points.

First, Freud questioned the validity of religion and viewed it as a sometimes necessary evil which serves to shield the believer from

⁶⁷Erik H. Erikson, Young Man Luther (New York: Norton, 1962), pp. 22-23.

⁶⁸Erikson, Young Man Luther, pp. 261-262.

⁶⁹Ibid., pp. 253-262.

⁷⁰Sigmund Freud, The Future of an Illusion (Garden City: 1964), p. 47.

his infantile feelings of helplessness before the superior powers of fate and civilization.⁷¹ Erikson holds that his purpose is not to question the validity of the religious perspective but to see how it functions in the personality.⁷² Moreover, Erikson perceives religion as having a positive value that can lead to wholeness as well as be used for defensive purposes.⁷³ One of the main conclusions of his study of Luther was that Luther forged a positive sense of identity out of his religious faith.

A second difference is that Freud locates the source of religion in the Oedipal crisis of the genital period of psychosexual development.⁷⁴ Erikson finds religion's psychological foundations in the first stage of psychosocial development.

There are according to Erikson three basic religious images, all of which have their source in the first stage of life.⁷⁵ The first is the image of an all caring, divine Provider on whom one can totally

⁷¹Ibid., pp. 19-24.

⁷²Erikson, Young Man Luther, p. 22

⁷³Ibid., p. 264.

⁷⁴Sigmund Freud, Totem and Taboo and Other Works (London: Hogarth Press, 1955).

⁷⁵Erikson, Young Man Luther, pp. 263-264.

depend and to whom one can return again and again for reunification and sustenance. This image derives from the earliest infant-mother matrix in which the mother is experienced as a "hallowed presence."⁷⁶

A second image is of the merciful God who judges and sanctions behavior. This image is rooted in the second oral stage in which the child experiences the mistrust of the mother as she withdraws from the bite of his teeth and begins to leave him at times in a renewed interest in the world outside of that of her and her baby. The natural behavior of the infant thus results in the feeling of being rejected, of having caused anger with himself, and of having shame and guilt in the powerful presence of the Provider.⁷⁷ The basic feeling of being abandoned, of course, is temporarily overcome when the loving mother returns again, but inevitably, a powerful sense of good versus evil has been planted. From this comes the projection of good and evil to the cosmic order.

The third image is of a God of "pure nothing." It stems from the "pure self itself," "the unborn core of creation," "the preparental center."⁷⁸ Here Erikson seems to be saying that every person carries deep in the core of his being a sense of purity of self that stands

⁷⁶Erik H. Erikson, "The Development of Ritualization," in Donald R. Cutler (ed.) The Religious Situation: 1968 (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), p. 714.

⁷⁷Erikson, Young Man Luther, p. 121.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 264.

alone and which existed before it became necessary for the infant to be self in relationship to others. It is this which a person confronts in the integrity crisis and again in death.⁷⁹

The fundamental split of life occurs in the first stage of development, an estrangement of abandonment which lives on in adulthood and which the person seeks to heal by participation in a collective world view that restores the sense of basic trust. Thus, religion is an issue for identity and ideology, for it is in the commitment to a cultural ideology that a person integrates the past with the future and himself with his culture to form a psychosocial identity. Religion as a cultural ideology

"systematizes and socializes the first and deepest conflict in life: it combines the dim images of each individual's first providers into collective images of primeval superhuman protectors; it makes comprehensible the vague discomfort of basic mistrust by giving it metaphysical reality in the form of defined Evil; and it offers to man by way of rituals a periodic collective restitution of trust which in mature adults ripens to a combination of faith and realism"⁸⁰

Erikson thus views religion, in part, as an attempt to restore an original wholeness lost in the first stage of childhood. It was this which Luther did in his struggle to find a sense of identity. Luther's forming of a positive sense of identity was the result of his restoring a sense of basic trust he had experienced with his mother through a mature faith in a loving God.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 264.

⁸⁰ Erikson, Identity: Youth and Crisis, p. 83.

⁸¹ Erikson, Young Man Luther, p. 255.

Erikson does not hold that religion is only an expression of the first stage of development. This is the core experience, the heart of religion. However, the original split is relived again and again in new forms and with new actors throughout the other crises of the life cycle.⁸² An affirmation and restoration of wholeness is sought for each and every one of these crises. Organized religion provides the rituals for this purpose.⁸³

God, consequently, can take on characteristics of both a person's father and mother, as Erikson demonstrates in Young Man Luther. Parenthetically, a number of studies have demonstrated that God can have the characteristics of both a father and a mother.⁸⁴

If the religious experience is for Erikson a partial regression to childhood and the belief in God a projection of infantile desires and experiences, it is a regression and a projection that can have positive effects. Here Erikson's position is consistent with Kris'

⁸² Ibid., pp. 255-263.

⁸³ Erikson, "The Development of Ritualization," pp. 711-733.

⁸⁴ Marvin O. Nelson and Edward M. Jones, "An Application of the Q-Technique to the Study of Religious Concepts," Psychological Reports, III: 3 (1957), 293-297; Orlo Strunk Jr., "Perceived Relationships Between Parental and Deity Concepts," Psychological Newsletter, X: 2 (1959), 222-226; Dan J. Peterman, "Familial and Personological Determinants of Orientations Toward God" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of California, 1965).

concept of regression in the service of the ego.⁸⁵ In the regression of the religious experience there can be a resynthesis of early conflicts, hence a regression from which the ego reemerges with renewed strength and a new wholeness.⁸⁶ Of course the regression can also result in a totalism which serves defensive purposes.⁸⁷

From the psychoanalytic point of view the idea of a positive regression is significant because it moves religion and God from the superego, ala Freud, to being a function of the ego, thus giving religion and the belief in God the potentiality of having an integrative, growth producing effect on the personality and society. Luther's identity crisis centered on his struggle to find an identity of his own apart from that of his father. Through a reformulation of faith he came to terms with the negative conscience of an overpowering superego and reestablished the basic trust experienced in the relationship with his mother at the core of his identity and religious faith.⁸⁸

Religion, of course, not only looks to the past for a restoration of what once was, it also looks to the future for a glimpse of what can and will be. It looks to the creation of a universal world

⁸⁵Ernst Kris, "The Psychology of Caricature," in Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art (New York: International Universities Press, 1952), pp. 173-188, cited by Hartmann, Ego Psychology, p. 37.

⁸⁶Erikson, Identity: Youth and Crisis, p. 83.

⁸⁷Ibid., pp. 83-84.

⁸⁸Erikson, Young Man Luther, p. 255.

order where the alienations of the past can be overcome again and again, to the fulfillment of the ongoing process of life, and finally to an answer to the threat of nothingness which lurks beyond death. Thus Erikson writes that religions "keep alive the common symbols of integrity distilled by the generations."⁸⁹ Religion involves looking to the future to tie together the unity of the life cycle through a system of meaning and value. This is, of course, the function of identity and ideology.

Erikson holds that for the homo religiousus the integrity crisis brought on by old age and the threat of impending death is "a lifelong and chronic crisis."⁹⁰ In the more ordinary man this is probably not a major issue until he reaches the final stage of development. However, every person has lurking in the background that foreboding "ego chill" of never having been, the feeling of nothingness that is experienced as a "metaphysical anxiety."⁹¹ Here is the question of "existential anxiety" and "existential identity" the answer to which can be found only in a world view universal enough to be trusted to deliver a hoped for affirmation of one's essential beingness in the flux of change and one's participation in one's social order, even in the face of eventual death which threatens to destroy the hoped for

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 264.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 261.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 111.

unity.⁹² Religion provides this world view by formulating values universal enough to be trusted to maintain the continuity and sameness of personal and group identity and to give an integrity to the life cycle of the individual and to the history of his culture.

While Erikson affirms the positive, integrative role that religion can play in the personality and society, he observes that nonreligious ideologies seem to be filling the function that religion did for men in past ages.⁹³ But he observes that modern man lacks and needs "a living religion" that moves beyond the totalness of the impersonal technological ethos.⁹⁴

Here Erikson uses "religion" in a different sense than that of organized religion. In this broader perspective, religion means a universal world view which extends beyond that of exclusive group ideologies and identifications, including those of organized religions, politics, or scientific points of view. He posits man's need for "a living religion" in terms of an inclusive, universal, humanistic, technological ethic.

"The utopia of our own era predicts that man will be one species in one world, with a universal technological identity to replace the illusory pseudo-identities which have divided him and with an international ethics replacing all moral systems of superstition, repression, and suppression."⁹⁵

⁹² Ibid., pp. 110-115.

⁹³ Erikson, Insight and Responsibility, p. 127.

⁹⁴ Erikson, Identity: Youth and Crisis, p. 84.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 241.

Thus, although Erikson recognizes the positive values of a religious perspective that includes a conception of a supernatural God, he formulates his own perception of man's need for religion in terms of a universal, humanistic worldview.

CHAPTER III

ALIENATED IDENTITY

The problem of identity and alienation from the self is a frequent consideration in psychological thought. Karen Horney formulated it as a problem of the real self as distinguished from the idealized self-image.¹ Fromm views it as the problem of the original, real self as differentiated from the conventional, or psuedo-self.² Laing speaks of the split between the inner or embodied self and the disembodied or false self.³ Schachtel uses the term "alienated identity" to describe the reification of identity.⁴ Erikson implies an alienated identity with his concept of negative identity.

In the discussion which follows I will outline a model of alienated identity drawing on Erikson's understanding of identity. The thoughts of other writers will also be used to help clarify what is being said.

¹Karen Horney, Neurosis and Human Growth (New York: Norton, 1950).

²Erich Fromm, Escape From Freedom (New York: Rinehart, 1941).

³R.D. Laing, The Divided Self (Baltimore: Penguin, 1959); R.D. Laing, Self and Others (Baltimore: Penguin, 1971).

⁴Ernest G. Schachtel, "On Alienated Concepts of Identity," Journal of Humanistic Psychology, I: 1 (1961) pp. 110-121.

I. DEFINITION

By alienated identity I mean a totalistic, illusory identity which the person seeks outside himself in the behavior and opinion of others.

Totalistic

I say that the alienated identity is "totalistic" because it reflects an attempt to fix identity into an unchangeable formulation once and for all. Schachtel states that the alienated identity reflects a search for a "definite," "fixed," "reified" identity.⁵

Erikson's concept of negative identity provides an example of a totalistic identity for this is an identity of "I am now and forever the opposite of what significant others want me to be." The alienated identity is closed to change.

Illusory

An alienated identity is called illusory because it is an attempt to find an identity by making it a thing. This is impossible because identity cannot be found; it can only be lived in the ongoing process of life. Erikson has shown that a positive sense of identity is an integration of the past, present, and anticipated future into a coherent wholeness. While identity is a sense of sameness and continuity in time, Erikson does not mean it is fixed into an object. To

⁵Ibid., p. 112.

try to fix identity into a totalism is to deny the reality of the process necessary for the formation of a positive sense of identity, and therefore is to try to live an illusory identity. As Schachtel writes, persons with alienated identities want

"to substitute a fixed, reified personality for the concrete, ongoing process of living, feeling, acting, thinking in which alone they could find themselves....Their quest is self-defeating because what they search for is an alienated concept of a thing rather than a living, developing person."⁶

Thus the person tries to live the illusion that he has an identity, even as he denies the reality that identity is a process of wholeness and integration.

There are other illusions involved in the alienated identity which will be discussed in the section on alienations. But this is the central one.

Externally Given

The person with an alienated identity seeks his identity outside himself in the behavior and opinions of others because behind the alienated identity lies identity confusion. Identity confusion is the result of the failure to synthesize the internal and external factors which need to be synthesized. But every person needs an identity. If he cannot find it in his own integrative processes he must seek it elsewhere. Lacking confidence in his ability to be who he is, i.e. a growing, dynamic, living, whole person, the individual asks others to tell him who he is.

⁶Ibid, p. 113.

Identity formation is a process of self-definition in relationship to self and self-definition in relationship to others. The person with a positive sense of identity integrates the self-realization and self-objectification aspects of identity into a coherent wholeness characterized by mutuality. The person with an alienated identity, lacking confidence in his ability to accomplish this integrative task and in the social acceptability of any integration he might achieve, seeks self-realization giving up his responsibility for it to others. He asks others to give him the identity which he needs. Persons often come to a therapist saying that their therapeutic goal is to find out who they are. They then engage in a series of manipulations which make evident that they want the therapist to tell them who they should be.

II. THE NEGATIVE SELF-IMAGE

There is always a "should" quality to the personality with an alienated identity. "I should be this." "I should be that." "I shouldn't be this." "I shouldn't be that." "I don't know who I am, but I know who I should be." Horney calls this "the tyranny of the should."⁷

This "shouldness" derives from the fact that behind identity confusion lies a negative self-image which the person is striving to overcome. Schachtel calls this the "secret counter image," the image that tells a person he

⁷Horney, pp. 64-85.

"would be lost, would be nothing if it were not for the alienated quality on which the feeling of being somebody, or the feeling of vanity is based."⁸

The implication is that the negative self-image is an image of oneself as being a helpless, bad person who would be nothing if it were not for the totalism of the alienated identity which one should be.

The negative self-image is rooted in the child-parent relationship in which the child is unequal to the superior powers of the parent. Out of this relationship come the inevitable estrangements characteristic of the childhood stages of development. A person cannot avoid forming some sense of what Erikson calls the "negative conscience" from which come some of the feelings of mistrust, shame, doubt, guilt, and inferiority.⁹ This negative conscience is, of course, a reflection of the development of a negative, punitive, demanding superego. In response to this internalized agency of personality the person develops a negative self-conception of "I am not who I should be in the eyes of my parents, nor will I ever be good enough to earn their affirmation of who I am." "I am helpless and bad before the superior power of their judgment."

In the formation of a positive sense of identity a person synthesizes the perceived expectations of his parents along with the positive sides of the developmental crises into a coherent wholeness whereby

⁸ Schachtel, p. 120.

⁹ Erik H. Erikson, Young Man Luther (New York: Norton, 1962), pp. 194-195, 214.

he becomes a person in his own right and equal to his parents. Erikson calls this the "counterbalancing" of "the inner remnants of the original inequalities of childhood," thereby "weakening the dominance of the superego."¹⁰ The person suffering from identity confusion, on the other hand, and needing a sense of identity, counterpoints these negative self-images of childhood by definitely and totalistically deciding to be what one should or should not be.¹¹ He may seek to gain a sense of mastery in a negative identity of trying to be who he is least supposed to be or he may try to be exactly the person he thinks he is expected to be, thereby denying his negative self-image of helplessness. In most cases, however, the alienated identity is characterized by both negative identity elements and the "should" elements of the past and present.

Self-identity for such a person is, therefore, an attempt to reify the shoulds and/or the should nots of childhood as they are determined by the expectations, opinions or behavior of other persons. Schachtel comments that when identity confusion, or in his words, "the lack of a sense of identity," becomes conscious, "it is experienced often, probably always as a feeling that, compared with others, one is not fully a person."¹² To cover up this basic insecurity the person

¹⁰Erik H. Erikson, Identity: Youth and Crisis (New York: Norton, 1968), p. 89.

¹¹Ibid., p. 87.

¹²Schachtel, p. 112.

with an alienated sense of identity tries to live a facade of whom he should or should not be, asking other people to give him or verify the content of this totalistic, illusory, alienated identity.

Inferred here is the fact that the person with an alienated identity does not take responsibility for himself. The exclamation, "I can't," spoken often by persons in therapy, reflects the childhood giving up of one's self-responsibility to the superior power's of one's parents and in adulthood the projection of that responsibility to significant others. Laing holds that this is a projection where

"...one person does not use the other merely as a hook to hang projections on. He strives to find in the other or to induce the other to become the embodiment of projection."¹³

He is, then, trying to make the other person "the responsible one," responsible both for his insecurity and for his totalistic identity of shoulds and should nots. If he can make the other person responsible, he does not have to face either his sense of helplessness before the superior powers of his existence or the terror that lies beyond the sense of helplessness; the terror that if he takes charge of his integrative processes and lives a dynamic life of growth, he will not be affirmed by other persons. So he tries to live the facade of the totalistic, illusory alienated identity of "I should or shouldn't" and "I can't."

This of course tends to be an unsatisfactory maneuver for it does not satisfy his need to be a self-realizing person in a relation-

¹³Laing, Self and Others, p. 111.

ship of mutuality with others. In short, he does not satisfy his need for a positive sense of identity. Consequently, the person with an alienated identity is likely to have an inner resentment because his basic thrust toward a positive sense of identity has been frustrated. Such anger is often plainly evident in one who chooses a negative identity. In the passive person who seeks to achieve the internal and external "shoulds" of his life, the anger is found to be smoldering beneath the surface of the facaded identity. It is this anger which in part provides the motivation and energy for movement toward the wholeness of a positive sense of identity in therapy.

It needs to be reiterated at this point that throughout this dissertation I am describing ideal types. No person has a totally alienated identity, nor does a person have a purely positive identity. But there are those who are oriented more one way than the other. Individuals with an orientation toward an alienated identity will have positive identity elements present in their personalities. Those with an orientation toward a positive identity will have negative identity elements and "should" elements present in their personalities.

In the following section a case illustration will be presented to help clarify the discussion to this point.

III. CASE ILLUSTRATION

John is a 23 year old Chicano who married a white woman thirteen years his senior. He came to therapy "to discover who I am." At the outset of therapy he complained of having a vague feeling of anxiety and of being dissatisfied with his job as a laborer and with his marriage. He also emphatically stated an intense dislike for Mexican-Americans whom he described as "greasy Mexicans." In telling stories about his relationships with others, he reflected considerable grandiosity in his self-perception of besting the other person or of standing up to the other person. In contradiction to this self-perception was his wife's report that he only rarely stood up to other people, a report that was confirmed by his style of relating to others in a therapy group. It was evident that John was trying to live a facaded, totalistic alienated identity that was characterized by both should's and should not's.

John grew up in an illiterate Mexican family in which the mother was the dominant, controlling person. She can best be described as a nagging, complaining mother who was never satisfied with anything anybody in the family did. His father is a passive man, but who, according to John's perception, would never approve of anything John did without criticizing him and demanding a better performance in the future. The death of a favored older brother who was preparing for the priesthood when John was four years old apparently led to the parental expectation that John would have to fill the deceased brother's shoes. As he grew up his mother was the final and irrevocable judge

of every aspect of his life. His social life was extremely restricted and he was not allowed to date girls. He finally escaped the parental home when at the age of 20 he met his wife, Judy, moved into her home and subsequently married her.

John's response to the condemning voice of parental authority was to try to become that which he should not be. He adopted an alienated negative identity. Partially in response to his parent's demand that he become a priest he developed a learning problem and subsequently did not learn to read above a second or third grade level; yet he has unsuccessfully made several attempts to attend college. He repudiated his parent's Mexican heritage and his own inescapable part of that heritage by marrying a well educated white woman who lived in a white middle class suburban development. This was, of course, unrewarding and self-defeating because he was still responding to the negative, condemning voice of his internalized parents. He could not find a positive sense of identity in this totalistic "should not" because he denied his own autonomous, living developing self. Such an approach to identity does not deal in an integrative way with the mistrustfulness, doubt, guilt, and inferiority of the negative self-image. It only creates the illusion that such feelings are no longer present.

John sought his identity, hence his salvation, in his wife. Her education, whiteness, and middle class status were everything his parents were not. Moreover, her thirteen years seniority in age reflected a search for an affirming mother who would tell him who to be.

Because of her personality characteristics she had the capacity and a partial willingness to take on this responsibility.

This arrangement inevitably failed after a period of about a year and a half. It failed, first, because no matter how hard one tries one cannot get one's identity from another person. As has been stated, identity is a process of the integration of the autonomous, living developing self. Another person cannot accomplish this integration. John was inevitably disappointed by the fact that Judy could not give him what he wanted from her.

A second reason John's attempt to find his identity in his relationship with Judy failed is that the affirmation which he wanted from her was perceived in terms of the alienated identity rather than received as affirmation of self. Hence, John was inevitably going to arrive at the conclusion that deep in the core of his being he did not feel loved by Judy. His perception was that she would not love him unless he performed for her.

The marital arrangement was also doomed to failure because John carried a totalistic should quality to his request that Judy give him his identity. There is always ambivalence in the negative identity about being bad or good, about pleasing or displeasing. When John lived with his parents he tried to be the good child. He carried this to his relationship with Judy and reified it as a quality of his identity. He felt he should be the performing, pleasing person if he was to get Judy to be the good, affirming mother. It is no wonder he felt trapped in the relationship. He felt he had to live an illusion

with Judy just as he lived one with his parents.

Naturally when Judy disagreed with him and got angry with him, John perceived this as coming from a nagging mother to his negative self-image of being a helpless, bad child. The unresolved feelings of mistrust, guilt, shame, doubt and inferiority were then brought to awareness. This led to a downward spiral of disintegration whereby John increasingly played the rebellious, guilty child. Judy's frustration at not having a satisfactory adult relationship coupled with her capacity to play the role of the nagging mother contributed immeasurably to this process.

Progress was made in therapy only when John began to be aware that he was still under the dominance of his internalized parents and that he, not his wife, was responsible for his sense of identity. He subsequently began to work through some of the unresolved conflicts with his parents.

IV. ALIENATIONS

I have already implied some of the ways in which the totalistic, illusory identity is an alienation. In this section these alienations will be made explicit.

From Vital Self

The alienated identity reflects an estrangement from one's living, vital, autonomous self. By making one's identity an immutable, changeless object, one denies the potential for growth and expansion of the self. In this respect the alienated identity is an alienation from a person's one and only life cycle which contains an inherent pattern for a developing, living, expanding individuality.

It can therefore be said that the person with an alienated identity is estranged from his past and from his future. He is alienated from his past because in counterpointing the negative aspects of the developmental crises into a totalistic identity he denies the positive gains of childhood development.

It should be remembered that the basic crises of the developmental stages result in a retention of a ratio of the positive and negative poles. If a person reaches a negative solution in every crisis there is a residue of basic trust, autonomy, initiative, and industry. I do not even assume that a person with an alienated identity reached a negative solution to all or even one of these crises. It is possible to have successfully negotiated the childhood stages, only to fail to achieve a positive integration in the identity crisis.

At any rate there is a residue of what Erikson calls ego strength and those qualities of ego strength he calls virtues. It is these potentialities which the totalistic identity denies and hence is alienated from. Schachtel holds that a person with an alienated identity usually has a positive counter image in a generalized vague form.

"Man has potentialities for overcoming his alienation from himself and for living without the burden and without the artificial props of alienated identity concepts."¹⁴

It should be understood here that the person with an alienated identity is not necessarily a person with the acute pathology of a psychotic or even that of a severe neurotic. Laing uses the concept of false self to describe the schizophrenic personality, stating that the schizophrenic has a "primary ontological insecurity."¹⁵ This is characterized as having a lack of any sense of identity or autonomy of one's own, of having no experiences of one's temporal continuity, and of having no sense of consistency or cohesiveness, so that one is preoccupied with preserving oneself rather than gratifying oneself.¹⁶ My position is that the person with an alienated sense of identity does have some sense of positive ontological security which is reflected by the unconscious positive counter image. His problem is that he splits himself off from this security and strength, denying its existence.

The person with an alienated identity is also estranged from his future. His reification of his identity into a once and for all

¹⁴Schachtel, p. 120.

¹⁵Laing, The Divided Self, p. 41.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 42.

object cuts him off from the ongoing process of the life cycle. His primary goal becomes one of getting other people to give him his identity, fixing it in time. Such was the case with John, for he held rigidly to the vision of being that which his parents did not want him to be, excluding all other possibilities.

A second way that the alienated person is estranged from himself is that he has severed the mutuality of the self-fulfillment - self-objectification process of identity. He splits himself off from his responsibility for his self-fulfillment by reifying self-objectification into a set identity. He essentially says, "I can only be what others want me to be or don't want me to be," or "what they tell me I am as I perceive it in their behavior." He consequently does not experience himself as a fulfilled, living, autonomous, growing being.¹⁷

He also prevents himself from experiencing real self-objectification because the alienated identity is an illusion. While he seeks affirmation of it and at times gets it, what he really wants is the affirmation of his real autonomous self. His inherent strengths and the inherent strengths of the other cannot be mutually elicited and integrated into his personality because he has negated this possibility by reifying the process of self-fulfillment-self-objectification. When he tries to be what others want him to be, he is only living a facade.

¹⁷Schachtel, p. 118.

From Others

Implied in this discussion is the fact that the person with an alienated identity is estranged from other persons. In the depths of his being he stands alone being cut off from the "I-Thou" relationship as described by Buber.¹⁸ He relates to others on the basis of his illusory alienated identity thereby precluding any possibility of letting them really know him. He presents a facade to others, pretending to be what he is not. It may be the facade of a performer, or a pleaser, or an authority. He may reflect self-assurance, but behind the facade is the confusion of identity and the negative self-image.

Sidney Jourard has written a book on the importance of self disclosure for mental health and positive human relationships. He points to the alienation that results when a person hides behind a facade.

"When we are not truly known by other people in our lives, we are misunderstood. When we are misunderstood, especially by family and friends, we join the 'lonely crowd.' Worse, when we succeed in hiding ourselves from others, we tend to lose touch with ourselves. The loss of self contributes to illness in its myriad forms."¹⁹

The implication of Jourard's statement is that relating to other persons through the facade of alienated identity can result in a downward

¹⁸ Martin Buber, I and Thou (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958).

¹⁹ Sidney M. Jourard, The Transparent Self (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1971), pp. vii-viii.

spiral of increasing loneliness and increasing self alienation. Of course, many people can maintain themselves for a long period of time in this way if they do not face too great a crises in their lives.

Not only does the alienated person hide who he is from others, he also treats them as "things" by perceiving them as being responsible for his identity and by attempting to manipulate them to give him his identity. To hold that the other person is "the responsible one" is to deny who he is. It is to perceive him as having the identity one wants him to have. This makes him a reified object, the embodiment of one's projections. Perceiving another in this way screens out most of that which is an expression of his individuality. He is judged only in the light of whether or not he is giving me my identity. Berne has called this mode of perceiving another person the game of "If it weren't for you."²⁰ Laing refers to this style of relating as an attempt at collusion. If the other person responds the relationship becomes a "collusive relationship," or a relationship of "mutual self-deception."²¹ The relationship of John and Judy was collusive.

The person with an alienated identity attempts to manipulate others to be the responsible ones. He does this in one of two ways and probably does both at one time or another. Perls refers to these

²⁰Eric Berne, Games People Play (New York: Grove Press, 1967), pp. 50-58.

²¹Laing, Self and Other, p. 108.

as the "topdog" and the "underdog" styles of relating.²² The first tries to dominate the other person. He is the righteous authoritarian who tells the other what he should or should not do. If the other does not comply, then the topdog feels rejected and feels that his alienated identity is being threatened.

The underdog tries to perform according to the perceived demands of the other person, agreeing with him and trying to please him. By pleasing the other, the underdog is hoping that the other will like him, i.e. like the facade he puts on. Moreover, if he does what the other wants or agrees with him, he does not have to be responsible for himself. The other person becomes responsible for what the underdog thinks and does.

Whether the style of relating is that of the topdog or the underdog, the result is the same, the alienation of oneself from others in the attempt to formulate and maintain an alienated identity. Each person in such a relationship becomes a thing rather than a vital, unique self.

²²Frederick S. Perls, Gestalt Therapy Verbatim (Lafayette, Ca: Real People Press, 1969), pp. 18-19; See also, Everett L. Shostrom, Man, the Manipulator (New York: Bantam, 1968), pp. 9, 18-20.

From the World

The person with an alienated identity is also estranged from the world. He perceives the world as an unfriendly place in which it is not possible to be a living, growing, vital "I." He feels the world is not receptive to the idea of his being a trustworthy and autonomous, growing person.

This perception is rooted in negative experiences with significant others in childhood and new negative experiences in an everwidening social radius throughout the life cycle. As Erikson has clearly shown, development includes negative experiences as well as positive ones with external reality. The tensions that result from each stage of development are a result of the individual-social relationship in which the external world is experienced as both good and bad. The person with an alienated identity heightens the negative experience and tends to deny the positive. Consequently, he views the world as a negative, demanding, threatening, untrustworthy place in relationship to which he perceives himself in a negative light.

An alienated identity is the outgrowth of this "negative-negative" relationship. In the formation of an alienated identity one cuts himself off from the growth affirming potentialities which the world offers. In a narrow sense this can be viewed as an estrangement from the societal structure which is prepared to elicit the psychosocial strengths of the individual. In the broader sense the person is alienated from a world in which it is possible, if not yet accomplished, to be a part of a universal order of humanity, to transcend self and

society, and to be a self united in an interdependent relationship with other selves. In other words, the person with an alienated identity alienates himself from the world by denying its potential to elicit his essential wholeness as a growing, vital "I."

Of course, every person must link himself in some way with his culture through a cultural ideology. Moreover, every person must have some overall organized perception of the world to avoid being overwhelmed by the chaos of experience. In short, every person must have some kind of an ideology, the alienated individual as well as one with a positive sense of identity. In the next section I will consider the ideology of the person with an alienated identity.

V. TOTALISTIC IDEOLOGY

As was stated in the last chapter, fidelity is the virtue which develops along with the positive sense of identity. To have a positive sense of identity one must have the ability to commit oneself to a sociocultural ideology and to sustain one's loyalty to that ideology.²³ From Erikson's viewpoint, the basic experiences of childhood development and the values and world perspective of one's society join in identity with the commitment to a shared ideology, whereby one is enabled to be a developing, vital person in spite of the threatening alienations which are inherent to the developmental process.²⁴

²³Erikson, Identity: Youth and Crisis, p. 125.

²⁴Ibid., pp. 189-190.

A person with a positive sense of identity is able to make such a commitment, sorting out from a diversity of offered worldviews the one which best expresses and affirms his experience of self and the world. He integrates and internalizes, thus personalizes, the values of his culture and a shared meaningful understanding of the world. Because he has an integrated, coherent sense of self and a confidence in his ability to integrate new experience he is able to hold a wholistic view of a world in which it is possible to risk being a growing, expanding self in an interdependent relationship with society and the universe.

The person with an alienated identity, on the other hand, commits himself to a totalistic ideology. Lacking confidence in himself and the world he must totalize his view of himself and the world. As Erikson points out, the person who is confused about his identity seeks a totalism in order to protect himself.²⁵ Living under the threat of being overwhelmed by the estrangements of life and having a negative view of the world, the alienated person seeks to control his negative experience with the world through the adoption of a totalistic ideology which for him is positive and which rigidly holds the world in a firmly manageable place.

This totalistic ideology supports his alienated identity and gives it a system of values by which he can affirm the meaning of his existence. The reified identity needs a reified ideology. To admit to

²⁵Ibid., p. 87.

the possibility of the rightness of other viewpoints, to maintain a flexibility of perspective, is to risk having to face being overcome by the basic estrangements of the life cycle, a possibility which the alienated identity seeks to avoid. Lynd states this thought in this way in her discussion of shame:

"Confronting, instead of quickly covering, an experience of shame as revelation of oneself and society - facing 'actual life' - requires an ability to risk, if necessary to endure, disappointment, frustration, and ridicule. Commitment to any person or to any loyalty, like commitment to another person, involves the risk of being wrong and the risk of being ridiculous."²⁶

The person with an alienated identity fears taking such a risk. He seeks to cover up the threatening feelings of estrangement and inadequacy by recourse to a totalistic view of a world in which he can always be right. In this way he can avoid his feelings of helplessness and unworthiness and his largely unconscious perception of a negative, hostile world over which he has no control. He is therefore able to maintain an illusory sense of mastery and to view himself as having a meaningful, positive place in the world.

Implied in this discussion is the idea that the alienated person tries to maintain two world views: a totalistic sociocultural ideology and a generalized, diffused perception of the world as a demanding, threatening, untrustworthy place. The first is a distorted accommodation to a cultural perspective that functions to maintain and affirm the alienated identity. The second reflects his perception of

²⁶Helen M. Lynd, On Shame and the Search for Identity (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1958), p. 232.

his personal experience with the world, having its roots in his heightening of the negative experiences of childhood development, and functioning to maintain his negative self-image.

As a conception of the world, the sociocultural ideology, here utilizing Katz's delineation of the four functions of attitudes,²⁷ performs adjustive, ego-defensive, value, and knowledge functions for the individual's alienated identity. It performs an adjustive function by telling the person how to formulate his alienated identity into a socially acceptable configuration and providing him with a means of cultural identification. It performs an ego-defensive function, as has been indicated, by helping him deny the basic truth of his felt helplessness and unworthiness before the superior, demanding, punitive powers of a hostile world. It performs a value function by creating the illusion that in the conformance to cultural values he has a moral code which he can call his own. The sociocultural ideology performs a knowledge or meaning function by providing a structured, socially acceptable view of the universe in which the alienated identity has its assured niche in its corner of the world. These functions will be described in more detail in the next chapter when the God-concepts of the consensual religious person are discussed.

The point here is that the alienated person tries to maintain a vacated ideology which gives him an illusory sense of meaning and value and which is a contradiction to his secret, negative perception

²⁷See Chapter I, p. 24.

of the world, even as its rigidity reflects a response to the way he has chosen to respond to this negative perception. Pattison offers a model of morality which will help clarify this point. He calls this model "ego morality" and defines it as

"...the process and mechanism of balanced interdependent interplay between superego, ego ideal, narcissistic self-image, and autonomous ego values. Ego morality is the consequence of ego development, such that ego is the final common pathway for the establishment of values and moral choice to which the several forces of the personality have contributed."²⁸

Pattison indicates that a mature morality and ego strength are closely associated, holding that "it is ego strength rather than superego that results in moral behavior."²⁹ Erikson takes a similar position with his differentiation of the superego morality of childhood which is based on "a fear of threats to be forestalled" as contrasted to an integrated adult ethic based on those qualities of ego strength developed throughout the life cycle, qualities which reflect a looking forward to and striving for ideals shared in a relationship of mutuality with one's culture.³⁰ The person with an ego morality would, of course, have a positive sense of identity.

The person with an alienated identity holds a superego morality. His morality is that of shoulds and should nots which he tries to

²⁸ E. Mansell Pattison, "Morality, Guilt, and Forgiveness in Psychotherapy," in his Clinical Psychiatry and Religion (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969), p. 103.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 102.

³⁰ Erik H. Erikson, Insight and Responsibility (New York: Norton, 1964), p. 232.

fulfill in his alienated identity and his sociocultural ideology. Because of his feelings of helplessness and inferiority he is dependent on others to tell him what is right and wrong. In this respect his values as they are reflected in his sociocultural ideology are not really his own, even as they appear to be so because of the rigidity with which he holds them. They belong to somebody else, either the voice of his society which he thinks he must try to please in order to have an identity or the voice of the punitive internalized parental figures. The first gives content to his ideology, the second gives his ideology its rigidity. Not only must he be the way others want him to be, but he must also hold the values they want him to hold.

Consequently, it can be said that the ideological value system of the alienated person is an illusory one. It is a facade which in its expression tries to hide what his true values are. It is a pretending to have values which one claims as one's own but which really belong to somebody else.

This does not mean that the alienated person does not have a value perspective of his own. He does. It is a generalized value of accepting the negative judgment of the superior powers of one's existence that one is a helpless, untrustworthy, and inferior person who must give up responsibility for who he is to other people. It is the morality of the "I can't attitude," and the "I should or shouldn't" attitude. In the following chapter I will expand on this point as I discuss the personal value system of the consensual religious person.

Being dependent on others to maintain a reified, totalistic value system leaves one in a precarious position. Shifting value systems and the multiplicity of value systems which are characteristic of American society continually threaten to shatter the illusory, rigid moral ideology held by the person with an alienated sense of identity. The situation is difficult enough for the person with a positive sense of identity. It at times becomes impossible for the person with an alienated identity. Lowen holds that we are today experiencing an epidemic of depression partly because the rapidity of change of values has stripped away the illusory values on which the alienated man bases his life.³¹

Likewise, the alienated person is estranged from the meaning of his existence which he seeks to formulate in a totalistic ideology. He is dependent on others or things to give him his meaning. Lacking confidence in his ability to work out a meaningful existence in a meaningful world, he asks others to give it to him. His dependency may be on a particular institution, e.g. as a church, a social club, or a corporation. Or, it may be a dependency on material things, this certainly being a part of the "Great American Dream." In any of these cases it is a given world view, rather than one which is worked out and shared in an interdependent relationship between the individual and his society.

³¹ Alexander Lowen, Depression and the Body (Baltimore: Penguin, 1973), pp. 27-39.

This is, of course, an illusory world view which provides an illusory sense of meaning. Erikson infers in his definition of ideology that meaning can only ultimately be found in an ideology which transcends the individual-social relationship and perspective.³²

Frankl also makes this point when he holds that to have meaning a man must look beyond himself and society. He writes that

"...if Martin Buber...interprets human existence basically in terms of a dialogue between I and Thou, we must recognize that this dialogue defeats itself unless I and Thou transcend themselves to refer to a meaning outside themselves."³³

A wholistic ideology of a person with a positive sense of identity with its flexible, permeable boundaries is open to the possibility of the ever expanding meanings which the process of life and history reveal. The alienated person, by reducing his perspective of the world to a reified, totalistic ideology, denies the possibility of discovering this unfolding meaning of existence. He lives the illusion that reality can be meaningfully divided into neat, rigid categories.

Such an illusion may serve to keep his existence together and keep him functioning, but it fails in times of crisis or in times of social upheaval. In his reports on men's attempts to survive in a concentration camp, Frankl demonstrates what happens in times of crisis

³²Erikson, Identity: Youth and Crisis, p. 84.

³³Viktor E. Frankl, The Will to Meaning (New York: New American Library, 1969), p. 8.

when a person does not have a sense of meaning grounded in the reality of existence.³⁴ It is Frankl's conclusion that meaning is essential to survival. While his is an extreme example of the stripping away of all of the illusory props of meaning with which men fill their existence, other life crises can also shatter the illusions of meaning. It is no accident that persons most often seek therapy at times of personal crisis. For some, for example, the threat of the dissolution of a marriage in which the totality of the meaning of the person's existence was found in dependence on the spouse carries with it the threat of destroying the very fabric of the person's world and his reason for existence.

To this point the discussion has centered on the perspective of the individual. It is also significant that societies and subgroups of societies may hold a totalistic ideology that precludes the possibility of finding a transcendent meaning to life. Erikson discusses this in terms of the limitation of the technological ethos of modern life in which "self-made" man seeks security in his man made world. He views modern man's "unconscious identification with the machine" as causing "a kind of automatized and depersonalized child training."³⁵ He goes on to say that this reflects a need for modern man to function smoothly.

³⁴Viktor E. Frankl, Man's Search for Meaning (New York: Washington Square Press, 1963).

³⁵Erikson, Identity: Youth and Crisis, p. 84.

"The desperate need to function smoothly and cleanly, without friction, sputtering, or smoke, has attached itself to the ideas of personal happiness, of governmental perfection, and even salvation. Sometimes one feels a strange totalism creeping up in those naive initiators who expect a new wholeness to come from the process of technological development in and by itself, just as in times not so distant the millenium was to emerge from the unfailing wisdom of nature, from the mysterious self-balance of the market, or from the inner sanctity of wealth. Machines, of course, can be made more attractive and more comfortable as they become more practical; the question is where that deep sense of specific goodness will come from, which man needs in his relation to his principle source and technique of production in order to permit himself to be human in a reasonably familiar universe. Unanswered, this need will continue to increase a deep and widespread mistrust which, in areas overcome with all too sudden changes in historical and economic perspective, contributes to a willingness to accept a totalitarian and authoritarian delusion of wholeness, ready-made with one leader at the head of one party, one ideology giving a simple rationale to all nature and all history, one categorical enemy of production to be destroyed by one centralized agency of justice—and the steady diversion to outer enemies of the impotent rage stored up within."³⁶

Fromm has expressed a similar evaluation of modern culture as has Lowen.³⁷

The point here is that the social order in part encourages the development of alienated identities and offers totalistic ideologies to support these identities. The formation of a positive sense of identity and a transcendent, wholistic, meaningful world perspective is, then, a difficult task in the modern world.

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 84-85.

³⁷ Erich Fromm, The Revolution of Hope (New York: Bantam, 1968); Lowen, Depression and the Body.

CHAPTER IV

A MODEL OF RELIGIOUS ALIENATION

In the previous chapter I developed the concepts of alienated identity and negative self-image and explored their dynamics in the personality. The task of this chapter is to apply this discussion to the consensual religious person, particularly as it enlightens an understanding of the way his God-concept functions in his personality. More specifically, the task will be to build a model of the relationship of his God-concept to his identity.

This model will contain four basic components: the alienated identity, the negative self-image, a relatively positive cultural God-concept, and a negative personal God-concept. The basic contention is that the consensual religious person has an alienated identity, a negative self-image, and holds two unintegrated and undifferentiated God-concepts. After describing these components as applied to the consensual type, I will utilize them to build a two dimensional model: the alienated identity - cultural God-concept dimension and the negative self-image - personal God-concept dimension.

I. COMPONENTS OF THE MODEL

Alienated Identity

It seems evident from the studies presented in the first chapter that the consensual religious person has an alienated identity.¹ In summarizing this research I described the personality of the consensual type as one of rigidity, closedness, defensiveness, dependency, and low self-esteem. All of these terms could be used to describe the person with an alienated identity. Moreover, as is characteristic of a person with an alienated identity, the consensual religious type reflects a dependence on external identity clues and modes of behavior. He, further, has a negative world view, a perception of other persons as being untrustworthy, and a basic insecurity which reflects the sense of helplessness which underlies the search for a reified, identity. Finally, he demonstrates a dependence on a rigid, socially given perspective of the world which indicates that he has a severe superego, this again being a characteristic of a person with an alienated identity. Consequently, the consensual type can be characterized as one who has an alienated identity.

¹See Chapter I, pp. 14-15.

The Negative Self-Image:

Likewise the consensual religious person has a negative self-image as is clearly shown by the studies of Spilka and Allen, and Strommen.² This is the usually unconscious image which the alienated person accepts from the condemning, demanding, punitive parents. It is a "given" self-conception of helplessness and inadequacy, representing a "selling out" of one's self to the condemning and demanding voice of internalized parental authority. It is therefore a giving up of one's responsibility for being a self-fulfilling person in the process of becoming.

Those internalized negative voices hold out the promise that the consensual religious person will be acceptable if he will be who they say he should be, but condemn him for his efforts, while threatening him with destruction if he does not make the effort. In other words, his only hope for affirmation of his beingness is to be who they say he is, an untrustworthy, shameful, guilty, inadequate, confused person who had to try to be who others say he should or should not be. If he does not accept this definition of himself he faces the terrifying prospect of being nothing. He, therefore, has an investment in retaining this negative self-image. Being a helpless, dependent person is better than being nothing at all.

²See Chapter I, pp.5-7.

He, of course, counterpoints his negative self-image with an alienated identity of whom he should or should not be, a maneuver that serves to conceal as well as deny the negative self-image. The alienated identity is in part an illusory attempt to escape from the condemning inner voices even as it reflects the attempt to satisfy these voices by being who one should or should not be. Likewise, the negative self-image reflects an estrangement from his inherent potential to be a self-fulfilling person.

The Positive Cultural God-Concept

In the first chapter I posited that the consensual religious person has largely separated the personal and cultural dimensions of religion and of the God-concept. From this perspective the cultural God-concept is primarily the way his social group tells him he should experience God. It is not a reflection of the way he really perceives his experience of ultimate reality. For the most part this is his conscious concept of God.

I say that this is a positive God-concept because a society generally holds forth God as a positive force in its ongoing life. As Erikson points out, religion at its best serves to restore the sense of basic trust in a benevolent provider to whom one can return again and again.³ Of course, religion can be and is ambiguous in its presentation of God. In Christianity there has been a long standing tradi-

³Erik H. Erikson, Young Man Luther (New York: Norton, 1962), p. 118.

tion of tension between salvation by faith and works righteousness. Moreover, most of us are familiar with the "hell fire and brimstone" sermons which paint God as a hostile, threatening, punishing judge. However, behind even this lies the teaching that God is a loving father and benevolent provider who holds forth the promise of restoration of the basic unity of life, hence salvation from the estrangements of life. Consequently, the cultural God-concept of the consensual religious person is likely to be a positive concept. His problem is that he does not link this concept with the positive experiences of development whereby those experiences are enlarged upon and shaped into an adult wholistic conception of life and the world.

The positive nature of the cultural concept also has its roots in two possible internal sources which help explain why it is a rigid, reified concept that is childish in nature. First, there are some people who hold a totalistic, glorified conception of the good parents. By this I mean that the person does not admit to any possibility that his parents had any bad traits. He does not reflect the ambiguity of the experience of bad and good which mature people have in their perception of their parents. Rokeach has demonstrated that many persons with "closed belief systems" hold such an unambivalent, glorified picture of their parents, while also reporting having experienced a great amount of anxiety in childhood.⁴ The conclusion is that the

⁴Milton Rokeach, The Open and Closed Mind (New York: Basic, 1960), pp. 361-362.

family atmosphere did not allow for the expression of ambivalent feelings toward the parents.⁵

The implication of this is that the parent-child relationship is such that the child does not perceive his parents as unconditionally accepting of him. He feels he is only acceptable if he keeps his negative feelings to himself. The consequence is a contribution to a negative self-image and the feeling of "I am bad because I feel angry with my parents." The defense is an idealization of his parents which is projected to the positive image of God offered by his social group. However, it remains totalized in the concrete, infantile image of his parents. Bowers cites a case of a person who projected such an idealized image to God, this operating in his consciousness while in the unconscious lurked a negative image of God which was a projection of the reality of a negative experience with his father.⁶ This dichotomy is often demonstrated in therapy by the person who insists that his parents loved him ultimately and completely, but who lives as if he had never been loved by anyone.

Another internal source for the linking of the individual to the cultural God-concept is the wished for idealized parent. The other side of the coin from the glorified parent is the totally bad

⁵Ibid.

⁶Margaretta K. Bowers, "Psychotherapy of Religious Conflict," in E. Mansell Pattison (ed.) Clinical Psychiatry and Religion (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969), p. 238.

parent in whom one can perceive no positive attributes. I have often heard people condemn their parents totally and absolutely, while expressing a deep wish for the kind of good parents other people have. John's motivation, at least in part, for marrying Judy was a search for the ideal, good parent. This childhood fantasy can also be projected to the good God-image held forth by one's social group.

Consequently, the cultural God-concept is not simply a "consenting to" the opinion of one's social group, but also has connections with internalized parental images. In both cases, however, these are a reflection of the denial of the reality of the parent-child relationship and are therefore illusory.

The Negative Personal God-Concept

Even as the consensual religious person is accommodating himself to the cultural understanding of God, he is assimilating this understanding to fit his own negative, alienated perception of self and reality. The personal God-concept is an expression of the perception of one's personal experience with the ultimate reality of one's life. For the person with an alienated identity this is largely a negative reality rooted in the estrangements experienced in relationship with his parents. The world is therefore conceived of in the negative picture of being a demanding, untrustworthy, punitive place.

Assimilating the cultural idea of God, the consensual religious person distorts that idea to fit this negative picture of the world and the negative image of his parents. This is the God of the punitive

superego of which Freud writes. Projected on to God is the image of the parent who makes demands which one can never meet, who cannot be trusted to love unconditionally, who shames one's efforts to be oneself, who tries to make one guilty for having ideas and feelings of one's own, who makes one feel inadequate and inferior and who insists that one can have no identity of one's own.

Any or all of these images can be projected to the personal God, but at the core of the personal God-concept is an image of a rejecting God who cannot be trusted to unconditionally affirm one's essential wholeness and integrity. Consequently, for the consensual religious type the personal God is the God of the negative self-image.

The personal God-concept is primarily an unconscious image of God. Bowers points to this in the example cited above. It is unconscious because it is a reality the person would like to forget, consequently he represses it. Of course, he often reveals it in his verbalization of his belief in God, but usually this is done without the awareness of the negative quality of what he is saying about God. This is a "yes, but" verbalization, "Yes, God loves me, but I should be a better person." This "yes, but" quality reflects the consensual type's failure to differentiate and integrate his accommodation to and assimilation of the cultural symbol of God.

While there have been no empirical studies which have investigated the idea of a person having two unintegrated God-concepts, there are some studies which indicate that people within the same religious denomination do hold both positive and negative concepts of God.

Strommen's study indicates this.⁷ Also, three studies of different groups of Catholic girls who were picked as subjects because they were considered religious all demonstrate that persons within a single faith perspective can hold widely divergent views of God.⁸ These views could be categorized as either positive or negative. For example, some of the girls viewed God as a personal, loving, and benevolent father, while others viewed him a judging, impersonal, and threatening being. An implication that can be drawn from these studies is that some girls assimilated the group's teaching about God in a way that distorts the central understanding of God's unconditional love. Moreover, the Spilka and Reynolds study revealed that the girls with negative God-concepts tended to be more race prejudiced than those with positive ones, implying that there is a correlation between a negative God-concept and a negative self-image which a person seeks to deny by downgrading another racial group.

Conversely, in a study of 1,000 subjects Ellsey found a positive relationship between expressed self-acceptance, expressed acceptance of others, and belief in an accepting God, that is a God who

⁷Merton P. Strommen, et al., A Study of Generations (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1972).

⁸Phillip J. Armatas, "A Factor-Analytic Study of Patterns of Religious Belief in Relation to Prejudice" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Denver, 1962); Bernard Spilka, Phillip J. Armatas, and June Nussbaum, "The Concept of God: A Factor-Analytic Approach," Review of Religious Research, VI: 1 (1964), 28-36; Bernard Spilka and James F. Reynolds, "Religion and Prejudice: A Factor-Analytic Study," Review of Religious Research, VI: 3 (1965), 163-168.

loves people unconditionally, in spite of what they do or fail to do.⁹ While this is only one study, it does lend some support to my contention that the committed religious person, who has a positive sense of identity and a wholistic worldview, will hold a God-concept of God as a positive, integrative force in his life.

II. THE DIMENSIONS

The Cultural God-Concept and Alienated Identity

The cultural God-concept is primarily a function of the alienated identity. This assertion is based on the fact that both reflect an attempt to deny the negative self-image and negative worldview which hides in the unconscious. Moreover, both reflect an attempt to be and to believe as others say one should. In this section I will seek to show that the cultural God-concept performs all four attitude functions for the alienated identity.

The Adjustive Function. Most of the research cited in Chapter I concludes that one of the primary functions of the religion of the consensual type is an adjustive one. Nor can it be denied that he does use his cultural God-concept in this way. Needing to find a solution to his identity confusion, the consensual religious person

⁹Charles H. Ellzey, "Relationships Among Acceptance of Self, Acceptance of Others, and Belief in an Accepting God" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, Columbia University, 1961).

seeks a reified identity by adopting the shoulds and should nots of his social group. If one of the shoulds is a belief in a good God then he adopts that belief. In the mere acceptance of the socially approved idea of God he helps meet his need for a socially given identity. By professing the belief, he can let his social group know he is acceptable.

The cultural God-concept is also a means whereby he can feel that his alienated identity is acceptable to his social group. In this respect God becomes the giver of social acceptability, and is therefore a tool for meeting the larger goal of a socially given identity.

Of course God can serve a utilitarian function for any believer, committed as well as consensual. Pratt was in part right when he wrote that "people are chiefly interested not in what God is, but what He can do."¹⁰ However, he goes on to point out that many people do not want God strictly for utilitarian ends but value God "as an end in Himself rather than as a means to other ends."¹¹ One of the essential differences between the committed and consensual types is that for the first God is primarily an end in himself and for the second primarily a means to another end.

¹⁰ James Bissett Pratt, The Psychology of Religious Belief (New York: Macmillan, 1907), p. 263.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 264.

This provides a partial explanation for the secondary nature of the cultural God-concept in the totality of the consensual type's belief system. Of more primary and immediate importance to him is a reified self-definition in cultural terms rather than in truly ultimate and universal terms that provide an identity grounded in the mutuality of self-fulfillment - self-objectification. Consequently, his cultural God takes a secondary role to this more important objective of self-objectification.

Here also is provided a partial explanation of why his cultural belief in God is so narrowly confined to the forms of organized religion. Because it is culturally given and because it is a means to the end goal of cultural identification, the consensual type conceives of God in relationship to those areas of his life which are labeled religious by his social group. There can be no doubt that a clear distinction has been drawn between religious activities and nonreligious activities in American life.¹² I do not mean to suggest that organized religion is not heavily acculturated. Many writers have shown that it is.¹³ The point is, however, that the popular American perception of

¹²Gordon W. Allport, "The Religious Context of Prejudice," in William A. Sadler, Jr. (ed.) Personality and Religion (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), p. 84; Will Herberg, Protestant, Catholic, Jew (New York: Doubleday, 1955), p. 86.

¹³Herberg, pp. 85-104; Gerhard Lenski, The Religious Factor (Garden City: Doubleday, 1961), pp. 300-308; Gibson Winter, The Suburban Captivity of the Churches (New York: Macmillan, 1962).

religion is that it has its proper place in life. Hence, there is the common attitude that "religion and politics don't mix." Culturally, God tends to be confined to the church and to Sunday morning worship. He does have something to do with death so a minister should conduct the funeral of a loved one. Holding such attitudes derived from his culture, the consensual religious person isolates God in prescribed "religious" activities, which means that the cultural God-concept is usually only operative for him in those situations which can be labeled as "religious." It is in such situations that his cultural God-concept gives him the feeling of being a part of his social group.

The Ego-defensive Function. The alienated identity of course is in part an attempted denial of the negative self-image and an attempt to escape from rather than face the basic estrangements of life. It is also an attempt to project the responsibility for one's identity to others. The concept of a good God helps the religious person maintain this illusion. If he can convince himself that the good God approves of his alienated identity then he can feel a measure of security in it. His cultural God, then, helps him ward off rather than work through the anxiety which underlies his illusory identity.

At this point the glorified parent image and the idealized parent image come together with the cultural God-concept. These images are defenses against the anxiety created in the parent-child relationship. By projecting them on to the cultural God, the consensual type finds support for these defensive conceptualizations in a way that is socially acceptable. I hold that this is a defensive

function because the projection is not based on the positive experiences with parents or other significant authority figures, but on illusory images. They do not contribute to an integration of personality, but rather help maintain its rigidity. The committed religious person, on the other hand, in part, projects to God positive parental images which are grounded in his reality experience of his parents being trustworthy persons who unconditionally affirm his need to be a growing, vital "I."

Salzman's model of "progressive or maturational conversion" and "regressive or psychopathological conversion" will help clarify this last point. He defines a progressive conversion as a

"positive fulfillment of one's powers, with self-awareness, concern for others, and oneness with the world. It occurs as the result of an achievement of cosmic identification as an outgrowth of maturity in the humanistic religions."¹⁴

The regressive conversion is, on the other hand, "a pseudo solution" to "pressing and serious problems in living" or to "extreme disintegrating conflicts."¹⁵ It does not result in integration, but in defensive behavior that reflects an attempt to channel hatred into socially acceptable forms. It is an "antithesis of a loving, kindly solution to the problem."¹⁶ Salzman points to the totalism of this solution

¹⁴Leon Salzman, "Religious Conversion," in Pattison, p. 180; see also, Leon Salzman, "The Psychology of Religious and Ideological Conversion," Psychiatry, XVI: 177 (1953), 177-187.

¹⁵Salzman, "Religious Conversion," p. 181.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 187.

when he indicates that its results are "a great intolerance of conflicting beliefs and of deviates from the 'true faith,'" an emphasis on forms and doctrines rather than on the greater principle of the belief, and an exaggerated irrational intensity of belief which is often lost after a period of time.¹⁷

The implication here is that in the progressive conversion the individual gets in touch with an essential cosmic wholeness of life which is conceived of in terms of God. The God-concept derived from the regressive conversion, conversely, is that of a socially approved God who functions, at least temporarily to help the person make acceptable his underlying negative feelings. He adopts the rigid, illusory identity of the good and faithful child of the good, ideal God. Such a maneuver does not lead to an integration of the negative feelings; it only temporarily mollifies them. This writer once attended a weeklong series of revival meetings during which one woman answered the "altar-call" on five successive nights, as if the conversion experience of the previous night was not sufficient to give her whatever it was she needed.

There are a great many consensual religious persons who have such intense religious experiences, but there are many others who have not. The latter occasionally seek a "recharge" of their "defensive batteries" at a Sunday morning worship service, or fall back on their cultural God-concept at times of crisis, e.g. the death of a loved one.

¹⁷ Ibid.

This may be effective for some in times of crisis, but for others it can lead to a repudiation of the cultural God-concept. For example, "If God allows little children to die, then I don't want anything to do with him."

The Value-Expressive Function. The cultural God-concept serves a value expressive function to the extent that the consensual religious person finds verification of his alienated identity in that concept and to the extent that he views the cultural God as the author and final judge of the instrumental values deemed important for his alienated sense of identity. I am here suggesting that the cultural God-concept has some function as, in Rokeach's meaning of the terms, an end value and an instrumental value.

Rokeach defines values as

"abstract ideals, positive or negative, not tied to any specific attitude or object or situation, representing a person's beliefs about ideal modes of conduct and ideal terminal goals...."¹⁸

Some examples of end values are security, happiness, freedom, equality, ecstasy, fame, power, and salvation. Some examples of instrumental values are cleanliness, sincerity, justice, reason, compassion, humility, and loyalty.

There is not space here to analyze all the various values the consensual religious person may hold. It can be said, however, that a general end value of the alienated identity is social acceptability.

¹⁸Milton Rokeach, Beliefs, Attitudes, and Values (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1968), p. 124.

To the extent that the consensual religious person perceives this as deriving from the cultural God it can be said that his God-concept is serving a value-expressive function. It thus can be very important at times for him to defend his belief in God.

Likewise, when the consensual religious person attaches values perceived as important for achieving cultural acceptance to the cultural God and appeals to God as the authority who condones his behavior, then the cultural God-concept is serving as an instrumental value that is of great importance to his alienated self-definition. For example, it may seem very important to him to love other people because "God wants me to." This value may be expressed in a distorted attempt to get other people to agree with his moralistic view of life and/or practiced with a select group of people. But it is nevertheless important to his maintenance of his alienated identity that he conceive of himself as doing God's will.

Moreover, such values may serve to enhance his illusory self-definition by being the means by which he evaluates the behavior of others. If he can think of himself as an obedient child of God who loves other people then he can build his self-esteem by highlighting the failure of others to love their fellow man.

The Knowledge Function. As was pointed out in the last chapter the person with an alienated identity seeks to understand the world in terms of his alienated identity. When the cultural God is viewed by the consensual religious person as providing this understanding, his cultural concept is performing a knowledge function. In those situa-

tions where he derives a measure of security from the idea that his alienated identity has an acceptable place in the grand scheme of the cultural God's creation, then he obtains some sense of meaning from his cultural God-concept.

This may occur for a person when he is comforted in the Sunday morning worship service with the thought that his participation in his denomination gives his facaded identity and himself a special place in God's world. It may occur for another when he perceives God as justifying his totalistic nationalism, or affirming his being a "good American." It may occur for another when he views himself as having a special place in God's eyes because he is "a moral person," while others are not. Whatever the case, it can be said that the cultural God-concept performs a knowledge function whenever it is used to substantiate the alienated identity as something special overagainst other people.

Of course, as Erikson points out, every person, every nation, every religion tends to have a psuedospecies conception of self that proclaims the God-ordained uniqueness of a cultural identity.¹⁹ Allport and Rokeach have both suggested that the teaching of "exclusiveness" is inherent to every religion.²⁰ The committed religious person

¹⁹Erik Erikson, Identity: Youth and Crisis (New York: Norton, 1968), p. 241.

²⁰Allport, pp. 77-79; Rokeach, Beliefs, Attitudes, and Values, pp. 189-190.

also holds to some extent a pseudospecies viewpoint. However, religion at its best seeks to transcend the divisions of mankind and to put these in their proper perspective. What differentiates the committed religious person from the consensual is that he tends to be open to the possibility of a unity of mankind while the consensual tends not to be. The latter tends to totalize the world into a closed ideological perspective in which he can have a rigid, alienated identity at the expense of other people.

Consequently, his organizing principle is social acceptability formulated in a totalistic version of some sociocultural ideology. This gives a sense of meaning, if illusory, to his alienated identity. Moreover, what the organizing principle of social acceptability leads to is the loading down of his cultural God-concept with a host of cultural images and ideals which "he should be." These are more important to him than is God himself. This makes him a worshipper of many gods. To quote Erwin Goodenough, he "just plugs along in polytheistic devotion to science, money, metaphysical dreams, family, social success, and what not."²¹

²¹Erwin R. Goodenough, "A Historian of Religion Tries to Define Religion," Zygon, Journal of Religious Science, II: 7 (1967), cited by Clemens E. Benda, "The Existential Approach to Religion," in Pattison, p. 43.

Case Illustration. Ted, twenty nine years of age, came to therapy when his wife left home and started divorce proceedings after eight years of marriage. It soon became evident that he had a grandiose perception of himself and his role in the marriage, a fact attested to by this comment he wrote in a letter to his wife:

"I never did anything to you,..., that I did not do only for you. Everything I ever did I did for you to try to make you happy and to show you that I loved only you. I take it by your words that you are going on with the case (the divorce). As long as I live I will never understand WHY. I guess this is the last big disappointment that you have for me as my wife."

From his perspective, Ted was blameless. The breakup of the marriage was entirely his wife's fault. He had been the perfect, good husband and she had been the unappreciative, bad wife.

This attitude was necessary for Ted to maintain a totalistic, idealized image of himself as a perfect, moralistic, loyal husband. He had to be perfect, to have the highest moral standards, to have no weaknesses, and to never fail. He had to because behind this reified, alienated identity lay a negative self-image burdened with guilt and mistrust.

Ted was raised in a rigid, religiously fundamentalistic home. His parents set high moral standards and exacting conditions for his behavior. No disagreement with their edicts was allowed. Ted glorified his image of his parents into that of being the perfect, loving parents. At no time in the therapy sessions and at no time in his relationship with his wife did he admit that he had any ambivalent feelings about his parents.

The implication of this is clear. Behind the reification of his identity and his parental images lay a guilt ridden and mistrustful negative self-image and the negative, condemning parental images who would affirm him only if he was the perfect child. Although a therapeutic breakthrough was not attained in which Ted consciously admitted such feelings, his attitudes and behavior revealed that the core of his negative self-image contained intense feelings of guilt about his sexual drives and his ability to control these drives. He denied such feelings by forming the alienated identity of being the perfect moral husband and by projecting them to his wife. In short, he needed his wife to give him his identity by being the bad person who he could strive to save.

A stated motivation for marriage was that he could help her with her emotional problems. He often accused her of being a slut and was extremely suspicious when she was late getting home from work. He did not want her to associate with divorced women because "everybody knows what divorced women are like," a statement meaning, when clarified, that divorced women are sexually licentious. Further, the only reason he could see for his wife's leaving him was that she was having a sexual relationship with another man, although this perception was not true. He, consequently, needed to save her from her sin in order to maintain his reified, moralistic identity and justify his commitment to a rigid moralistic ideology.

His need for his wife approached that of a desperate totality, as is reflected in this comment he made in a letter to the therapist:

"I want your help, I need your help, and I know that she has a real problem too that in fact stems far back before I ever knew her. But, when you really love someone, you want to do all you can to help them. I know that my first thought should or is to myself, but if I can help her, then too, I can help myself."

While the letter was in part an attempt to manipulate the therapist into saving his marriage, which was in itself a reflection of his desperation, it clearly indicates that Ted could not or would not conceive of himself apart from his wife. Despite her badness, she was the only woman he could ever love. He had totalized his life's meaning in a collusive relationship that affirmed his glorified alienated identity. Consequently, his life was shattered by the failure of the marriage.

In response, he turned to religion and began to attend a fundamentalist church that places great emphasis on sexual morality and marital fidelity. By doing this, Ted elevated his attempts to save his wife to a cosmic level, while still maintaining his glorified identity. He wrote to her:

"I don't have to tell you what your problem is...because I know that you know the reason you felt or feel as (you) do because of a guilty conscience for what you have done and are doing with your life. The only one that can and will help you is Jesus Christ. Through faith and trust in Him and reading His word, then and only then can you find a real peace of mind. You have turned your back on Him and through the Holy Spirit your conscience is ill at ease and you will never have a real freedom from physical pain or oppression or of discomfort. I am not asking you to come back to me, this does not matter now, what does matter is your life and your soul. Don't turn from Him any longer, you too can know this real peace and joy through Jesus, if you will only turn to Him and believe again in Him. I tell you this because I do love you and care for you. Read his word and believe in it, prayer can change things, don't let my dream of you come true."

This and conversations with the therapist indicated that Ted had adopted a social concept of a loving Christ, which matched up with his glorified image of his parents. By affirming a loving, cultural God, he received the support and approval of a group of people, who, according to his reports, totally took his side in his conflict with his wife. Hence, his cultural God-concept performed an adjustive function for him.

It also performed an ego-defensive function by allowing him to deny his failure to save his wife, and hence himself. He was still perfect. God and the religious community affirmed this. The threat that his guilt and mistrust would be exposed and brought to consciousness was therefore averted. This religious maneuver probably, at least temporarily, prevented a complete mental collapse that could have resulted in his taking violent physical action against his wife. His cultural God-concept provided a cosmic and socially acceptable battleground for his failure to either save or punish her. God, or Christ, would take care of that for him.

A value-expressive function was performed by Ted's cultural God-concept in that it justified the rigid morality of his alienated identity. He was right in God's eyes and in the eyes of his religious group in his attempts to save her from her sin. Hence he was doing God's will. This morality was, of course, applied to his wife and not to himself. While he apparently did remain sexually faithful to her, he was irresponsible in a variety of ways, including the heavy consumption of alcohol, the failure to make his child support payments,

the failure to keep scheduled visitations with his son, and a spending spree on a number of material items which he neither needed nor could afford. He could thus affirm a high moral value system which he felt he maintained, even as he lived another way.

Finally, his accommodation to a cultural God-concept performed a knowledge function by maintaining the illusory life meaning found in his relationship with his wife. While Ted had lost the immediacy of that relationship he restructured it on a fantasized cosmic plane where he could continue to try to save her through the manipulation of the power of God.

This case illustration has described an extremely disturbed and conflicted personality. While the consensual religious person will not often reflect such extreme psychopathology, the case does provide a clarification of the dynamics involved in the cultural God-concept - alienated identity dimension of the model.

Unfortunately Ted did not stay in therapy long enough to begin to look at his internal conflicts or even admit they were present. He was extremely resistant to the therapeutic process reflecting a deep fear of his negative self-image and its concomitant negative feelings. His turn to religion was no more therapeutic. He was alienated from his self as a growing vital "I" and from his society. He had reified his identity. Rather than bring him in touch with his essential strengths and the potential of self-transcendence, his accommodation to a cultural conception of God only served to maintain his estrangement. In the theological sense, despite his profession of faith, he lacked faith.

The Personal God-Concept and The Negative Self-Image

The cultural God-concept - alienated identity dimension is only a part means of relating to the world and of defining self. Even as a person like Ted professes a faith in a God of unconditional love, the should and should not quality of his life is revealed. The assertion of faith has a "yes, but" nature which suggests that the faith is qualified by a deep doubt that one can really be loved by God unless one performs to meet his expectations. And behind this lies the horrible fear that one can never be trustworthy enough to be loved at all. It is this deeper level of self and world conception that continually creeps into the person's behavior even as he seeks to conceal and deny it with his alienated identity. In other words, the consensual religious person lives the personal God-concept - negative self-image dimension even as he attempts to live the illusory cultural God-concept - alienated identity dimension. To say it more succinctly, the "yes, but" quality is usually present in his perceived relationship with God and his concomitant "religious" behavior.

The personal God-concept is the "but" side of this equation, just as the negative self-image is the "but" side of the alienated identity. Consequently, the personal God is the God of the negative self-image. In the following discussion, I will seek to clarify the dynamics of this dimension in terms of the four attitude functions.

The adjustive function. The personal God-concept serves an adjustive function for the negative self-image to the extent and in those situations that the personal God is seen as making it rewarding to have a negative self-image. While it may seem paradoxical to speak of it being "rewarding" to have a negative self-image, it should be remembered that for the alienated person the acceptance of a negative self-image is better than being nothing at all.

The adjustive function can be seen as operative when a person finds a reward in being a miserable sinner undeserving of God's love, and who must therefore compulsively seek to expiate his guilt long after one could safely assume that he had done enough to gain God's forgiveness. The reward here is that he can maintain a relationship with the Divine, All-Powerful Presence who conditions his approval on the basis of the acceptance of his condemning, negative evaluation of the believer and of his demand for continuous contrition. Erik Fromm states this thought in this way:

"...in order to persuade God to give him some of his love, he must prove to him how utterly deprived he is of love; in order to persuade God to guide him by his superior wisdom he must prove to him how deprived he is of wisdom when he is left to himself."²²

Freud implies the same dynamic in his discussion of the relationship of obsessive compulsive behavior and religious rites.²³ It is also evident in the regressive conversion. Even as the person accommodates himself to the cultural conception of a God who forgives unconditionally, and puts on the facade of a "saved person," internally

²²Erich Fromm, Psychoanalysis and Religion (New York: Bantam, 1967), pp. 50-51.

²³Sigmund Freud, "Obsessive Actions and Religious Practices," in Sadler, pp. 47-56.

he assimilates and distorts that belief into a personal image that squares with his negative perception of his internalized parents and with his negative self-image.

This perception is marked by the quality that one can be loved only if one accepts the judgment of one's parents that one is bad and helpless, and that one should continually act as if one is sorry. The perceived reality is that one will be loved by parents and by God, if one has a negative self-image and acts contrite about it.

This attempt to get love is, of course, a failure because one can never be contrite enough to earn the promised love. At best it brings a temporary approval. However, it maintains a negative relationship which is better than no relationship at all.

The Ego-defensive Function. The personal God-concept performs an ego-defensive function for the negative self-image to the extent that the personal God is viewed as being responsible for one's strengths and weaknesses, thereby mitigating the fear that one will be nothing at all if one dares to take responsibility for being a self-fulfilling person. In this maneuver the person transfers the "sellout" of his personhood to his parents from the internalized parents to the negative personal God, who becomes the condemning Power to whom one must look if one is to be anything at all.

A case in point is provided by that of Sally who came to therapy because of indecision about divorcing her husband who was a childish acting, compulsive gambler, playboy. Sally was an active member of

a fundamentalist religious denomination, a frequent church attender, and a self-proclaimed devotionalist. She professed a deep faith in God, felt close to him, and felt loved by him. However, it soon became apparent that this was an illusory, cultural concept of God and that she was attempting to live the facade of an alienated identity of a good, loved, and loving Christian person. Sally's style of relating betrayed her lack of faith. In relationship to her husband and seven year old son she was a hostile, nagging mother who would allow no deviation, no matter how slight, from her strict code of behavior. This style suggested that she had a powerful investment in seeing her husband and son as the guilty, mistrustful "bad ones," thereby giving her a reified identity.

What she was trying to cover up and was projecting to her husband and son was a negative self-image of a guilty bad person who could never please her punitive, condemning parents. In describing her relationship with her parents she said she never felt close to them and that she could never please them. She stated, "My father was not affectionate." "At the slightest thing he would slap me from room to room." "Mother had a need to control us." "She controlled me by making me feel guilty."

This negative parental image had been transferred to a negative personal God, a fact Sally revealed when she suddenly blurted out, "You know, I really don't feel close to God. I know I say I do, but I don't feel like he loves me. I can't be good enough to please him." This confession was made in a quiet, resigned, depressed tone

of voice which suggested that by admitting this fact, she was giving up all of her reason for existence. Within seconds she changed the subject and resisted all attempts by the therapist to bring her back to her confession. She terminated therapy after this session, as if it was too threatening to face this awful truth of her existence.

Living the unsatisfactory facade of an alienated identity and holding on to her negative self-image apparently offered more security than the giving up the projection of her responsibility for her life to a negative personal God.

The Value-Expressive Function. The personal God-concept can serve a value-expressive function for the negative self-image in a number of ways. First, it serves this function to the extent that the personal God is seen as saying that the person has to be a performing person. This is the value of works righteousness which the person expresses in his attempts to earn the love of others and of God. It finds its expression in the should be quality of the alienated identity and the rigid moral system which the believer seeks to live by and expects others to live by.

Second, it serves a value-expressive function to the extent that the personal God is seen as the giver of totalistic solutions to life's problems. This finds expression in the totality of the alienated identity and in the rigidity of his sociocultural ideology in which he categorizes people into good and bad, desirable and undesirable. It is easy to see others as bad if God is viewed as a punitive, condemning authority who does not tolerate the slightest devia-

tion from the norm.

Third, the personal God-concept serves a value-expressive function to the extent that the personal God is seen as making it desirable to live the negative values of the negative self-image. Prime among these is mistrust. It is expressed as living the life of a mistrustful person who trusts neither himself, others, the world, life, nor God himself. This was evident in both Ted's and Sally's lives.

The Knowledge Function. The personal God-concept serves a knowledge function for the negative self-image to the extent that the personal God provides a frame of reference for the believer's alienated world. The personal God in this respect makes alienation meaningful. The believer is alienated from this God. In accepting the judgment that he can never be acceptable enough to earn God's love even as he tries to, he denies the possibility of a relationship of mutuality. In so doing he substantiates his opinion that the world is mistrustful, as he is mistrustful; therefore he receives from his personal God the support for leading an existence in which what meaning to be found is found in the estrangement of a totalistic, narrow, world view.

He does this because he fears mutuality. To be in an interdependent relationship with another person means to risk exposing one's autonomous self. But the consensual religious person fears doing this. His internalized parental voices keep telling him he will

be at best punished and at worst destroyed if he dares to be who he is rather than who he should or should not be. Consequently, he adopts a life style of alienated meaning, seeking to maintain the life style even as he tries to find relatedness and structure. When it is functioning, the personal God-concept helps him maintain his unconscious perception of self as a helpless, alienated person in a rigid, threatening world.

III. CONCLUSION

I have drawn a negative picture of the function of the cultural and personal God-concepts in the personality of the consensual religious person. Although they at times help to hold his world together and give him some sense of relationship with his social group, they stand as supporters of a life of alienation. The consensual religious person is an estranged person, estranged from himself, from the world, and from the God he professes a belief in.

As negative as this may seem, I do not want to portray the consensual religious person in an entirely black light. What he is seeking in his life and his God-concepts are ways to meet the fundamental human needs for love, relatedness, meaning, self-fulfillment and wholeness. To be sure, he has distorted these needs and the means whereby to meet them. Nevertheless, he is a person who deep in the core of his being wants to "become" by living out the potential richness of his life. He seeks out religion because he is lonely and because he has a sense that there must be something more than the alienated life

he leads.

Moreover, as I have indicated, he does have an inner core of strength, a sense of the positive psychosocial strengths and virtues which enhance the quality of his life. Ted and Sally were not totally dysfunctional people, although they were extremely ineffective in many areas of their lives.

Finally, every person has the potential for growth. One of the great values of Erikson's perspective of the life cycle is that he shows that personality is not fixed in childhood. Each stage, including the adult stages, brings a new potential for self-fulfillment. Every person struggles to actualize these potentialities, the consensual religious person no less so.

From the therapeutic standpoint, the consensual religious person, therefore, has in him the potential and the means for developing a positive sense of identity. Moreover, he has the potential for turning his belief in two totalistic Gods into a faith in the wholeness of life, a transcendent meaning, and a sense of universal unity.

IV. IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH

One of the objectives of this paper was to provide a sound theoretical foundation for future empirical research in the area of personality and religion. The model which has been constructed provides such a foundation for researching the dynamics of the God-concept in the personality of one type of religious person. Built on the empirical research of Adorno, Allport, Spilka, Allen, and Strommen

and on the theoretical concepts of Erikson and others, the model points to some significant directions that future research in psychology of religion might follow. The following discussion will point out some of these directions.

An obvious starting point would be a utilization of the six delineating characteristics used to differentiate between the consensual and committed types as a means whereby to identify other religious types. As was suggested in the first chapter, there are probably other kinds of religious persons besides the committed and the consensual, one who might be called a "nominally religious person." A possible research project would be the investigation of this possibility, the general hypothesis of such a study being that the nominally religious person is one whose general personality orientation is wholistic and whose religious belief system is rigid and peripheral. Further theoretical work and research projects might reveal other general religious types.

Another area of study would be that of the components of the model as presented in this chapter. A number of research projects could be devised to validate the four basic components. Of particular significance would be studies aimed at identifying the positive and cultural God-concept and the negative personal God-concept. As was stated previously, there are, to the best of this writer's knowledge, no studies which have investigated the idea of a person having these two unintegrated God-concepts. The model provides a theoretical base

by which to examine this unexplored area. My contention is that this would be a fruitful area of investigation.

A third general area that could be investigated is that of the internal dynamics of the two dimensions of the model. The utilization of the four attitude functions as the means to explore the functions of the cultural God-concept and the personal God-concept in relationship respectively to the alienated identity and the negative self-image provides a solid, conceptual foundation for research on the function of the God-concept in the personality. This is largely an unexplored area in the research on religious belief. For the most part the research has concentrated on trying to discern the difference between the functions of liberal and fundamental belief systems. As was indicated in the first chapter, this approach has had mixed and inconclusive results. The model developed in this paper provides the groundwork for a new approach which can have fruitful results.

There are no doubt other research possibilities in the model which the diligent investigator of religion and personality might find to investigate. But the ones which have been discussed are sufficient to indicate that the model of the relationship of God-concept to identity in a consensual religious person opens the door to new avenues of research.

CHAPTER V

THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

It can be said that the consensual religious person is one who is alienated spiritually as well as psychologically. He is estranged from the ultimate power of integration and wholeness, his God-concepts standing as blocks to spiritual growth and a relationship to a Transcendent Unity. This is a concern of the pastoral counselor. Working within the context of a religious faith perspective, he holds that man can not really experience the wholeness of life until he is unified with the Cosmic Wholeness. Spiritual growth, as well as psychological growth, is, then, an important therapeutic goal of the pastoral counselor.

Taking such a position he is concerned with the relationship between the healing of the vertical spiritual dimension and the healing of the horizontal dimension. Is there a relationship between the two? Can the healing of the psychological dimension bring healing of the spiritual dimension? Or, can the healing of the vertical dimension bring the healing of the horizontal dimension? How does the pastoral counselor integrate these two approaches?

There are no easy answers to these questions. Since its inception the pastoral counseling movement has struggled to integrate the theological dimension and the psychological dimension, partly to find a theological justification for the utilization of secular psychotherapeutic tools in the work of the minister, and partly to lay

claim to a uniqueness for pastoral counseling as over against the secular practice of psychotherapy.

The intent of this chapter is to examine this issue in the light of the model of alienated identity and alienated God-concepts in the consensual religious person. The essential question to be examined is whether or not the finding of a positive sense of identity in the psychotherapeutic situation leads to a healing of the Divine-man relationship. In order to accomplish this task, I will first present the position taken by the pastoral counseling movement and then outline some of the issues between theology and psychology. In the final section I will hold that there is a relationship between psychological healing and spiritual healing.

I. THE PASTORAL COUNSELING MODEL

The Mission of the Church

The pastoral counseling movement has sought to justify itself and its use of secular psychotherapeutic techniques by appeal to the mission of the Church and by a commitment to a theological presupposition that a dimension of faith transcends all forms of religious experience. Hiltner expresses the pastoral counseling position when he writes that "there is a sense in which the aims of pastoral counseling are the same as those of the church itself...."¹ Clinebell's

¹Seward Hiltner, Pastoral Counseling (New York: Abingdon Press, 1949), p. 19.

view is similar in that he sees pastoral counseling as a "means of communicating the gospel," of establishing "a fellowship with a vertical dimension," and as "a ministry of service."² Of prime importance is the idea that pastoral counseling is a means of carrying out the "shepherding" function, or pastoral care function of the ministry.³ The learning and utilization of secular counseling skills enhances the pastor's ability to carry out this function. It is relatively easy to theologically justify pastoral counseling as a mode of the "shepherding" function. There is no clash between the theological understanding of the mission of the church and skillfully helping persons.

Nevertheless, pastoral counseling claims to do more. It is also a means of communicating the gospel and of healing the vertical dimension as well as the horizontal dimension of relationships.

Psychotherapeutic Experience as Religious Experience

In general, the pastoral counseling - pastoral psychology movement has substituted the psychotherapeutic experience for religious experience. Homans, in summarizing this development, states that

²Howard J. Clinebell, Jr. Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling (New York: Abingdon Press, 1966), p. 46.

³Clinebell, p. 50; Seward Hiltner, Preface to Pastoral Theology (New York: Abingdon Press, 1958).

"for the inner demands and autonomy of the religious experience itself, pastoral psychology substituted the therapeutic relationship, the strategies of psychotherapeutic technique, and a dynamic psychological understanding of human development....The pastoral counseling process, claimed as a theological reality by its practitioners, is the formal heir to the conversion experiences of the psychology of religion."⁴

The implication here is that the love of God becomes an experienced reality in the psychotherapeutic experience of psychological change. Such change can therefore be viewed as the finding of salvation, whether or not Christian teachings are made explicit in the counseling process.

Fundamental to the theological justification of this perspective has been the presupposition that God's unconditional love is a reality of life which can confront a person at anytime or anyplace. When one confronts this ultimate reality and accepts it for oneself, one has had what could be called a religious experience. It is this quality of unconditional acceptance which transcends all forms of religious experience, whether they occur in a religious worship service, in a counseling session, or somewhere else.

In regards to pastoral counseling, the saving power of God's love becomes efficacious in the counseling relationship as it is revealed in the counselor's unconditional acceptance of the counselee and as the counselee experiences and accepts this affirmation. Salvation

⁴Peter Homans, "Toward a Psychology of Religion: By Way of Freud and Tillich," in his The Dialogue Between Theology and Psychology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), pp. 61-62.

and the revelation of the love of God are therefore potentials in most psychotherapeutic relationships be they in a secular or a religious context.

Oden, for example, has stated this position clearly in his work Kerygma and Counseling. His central thesis is that "there is an implicit assumption hidden in all effective psychotherapy which is made explicit in the Christian proclamation."⁵ He is definite in what he finds this assumption to be:

"There is a tacit ontological assumption of all effective therapy not that it is merely the counselor who accepts the client but that the client is acceptable as a human being by the ground of being itself, and that the final reality that we confront in life is for us - Deus pro nobis."⁶

Working with this presupposition the pastoral counseling movement views psychotherapy as a means of removing those conflicts which block a person's ability to accept the love of God. Hiltner views the more definite and immediate aims of pastoral counseling as "rungs in a long ladder which lead(s) toward the general aims of the church and the pastor."⁷ Clinebell takes a similar position.⁸ From this perspective the pastoral counselor works to clarify explicitly and implicitly the counselee's distortions of faith. When such distortions are clarified and the psychological blocks to growth are removed, then the person is

⁵Thomas C. Oden, Kerygma and Counseling (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966), p. 9.

⁶Ibid., p. 21.

⁷Hiltner, Pastoral Counseling, p. 19. See also, Seward Hiltner and Lowell G. Colson, The Context of Pastoral Counseling (New York: Abingdon Press, 1961).

⁸Clinebell, p. 47.

open to and can appropriate the power of the gospel in his inner life.⁹

A central question remains. If the psychotherapeutic experience can be called a religious experience, how is the work of the pastoral counselor any different from that of the secular psychotherapist?

The Uniqueness of Pastoral Counseling

The pastoral counseling movement has claimed a uniqueness as a discipline. This claim is based on the counselor's training as a theological, religious, and ethical specialist, his role as a religious authority figure and representative of a religious community within the broader context of pastoral care and the ongoing life of the local church, his training in the use of religious resources, and regarding of spiritual growth as an essential objective of counseling.¹⁰

There is not space here to discuss all of these. Each has validity. However, the central concern of this discussion is the criterion of the goal of spiritual growth, for it is at this point that the theological questions become most difficult.

Pattison suggests that there are three approaches to dealing with religious issues in psychotherapy.¹¹ One is that of the "material

⁹Homans, p. 61.

¹⁰Clinebell, pp. 49-52. See also, Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., "The Future of the Specialty of Pastoral Counseling," Pastoral Psychology, XVI: 158 (1965), 18-26.

¹¹E. Mansell Pattison, "The Role of Religion in Psychotherapy," in his Clinical Psychiatry and Religion (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969), pp. 77-92.

reductionist" who views psychotherapy as a means to psychological goals, omitting and avoiding the larger questions of meaning and religion. Many psychoanalysts and behaviorists would fit this school of thought. A second approach is that of the "spiritual reductionist" who either rejects psychology completely, e.g. some religious fundamentalists, or who "cloaks Psychology in theology," e.g. some religious liberals.¹² The third approach is that of the "dualist" who views psychotherapy as a prelude to spiritual therapy. Some existentialist schools of therapy fit this category, as does Assagioli.¹³

Assuming a psychological - spiritual dichotomy, Pattison goes on to indicate that psychological techniques can lead to the resolution of spiritual conflict and that spiritual techniques can lead to the healing of psychological conflict.¹⁴ However, from his implicit dualist stance, he holds that the prescribed social roles of the minister and the secular psychotherapist place defining limitations on the therapeutic relationships of each, giving each his own special role as a therapist.¹⁵ The secular counselor and the minister may have the same goals, but each, to a large extent, should stay within the limitations of his specialty. Pattison thus writes:

¹²Ibid., p. 79.

¹³Roberto Assagioli, Psychosynthesis (New York: Hobbs, Dorman, 1965).

¹⁴Pattison, pp. 82-85.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 86-88.

"If we now reconsider the question of spiritual and psychological goals raised previously, we can see that the minister-patient relationship precludes working toward some psychological goals, while the psychotherapist-patient relationship precludes working toward some spiritual goals. It is not that the goals are undesirable, but that the relationship is a limiting factor."¹⁶

From this perspective the spiritual growth of the client can be the goal of the secular psychotherapist as well as that of the pastoral counselor. The uniqueness of pastoral counseling can be claimed only in terms of training, role definition, and social context.

Pattison's concern is the very important one of who can most effectively carry out a specific therapeutic goal. He, however, does not have the theological concern of the pastoral counselor, who, working out of the context of a specific religious faith perspective must try to theologically integrate his spiritual and psychological therapeutic work.

The attempts of the pastoral counseling movement to achieve this integration have resulted in its placing itself in an ambiguous position between the liberal "spiritual reductionist" understanding and the "dualist" understanding. Oden's thesis is clearly one of spiritual reductionism. Ungersma approaches such a position in his study of Frankl's existential analysis as it relates to pastoral psychology, as does Browning in his study of the doctrines of atonement and their relationship to psychotherapy.¹⁷ Hiltner's "step-ladder" approach reflects an

¹⁶Ibid., p. 88.

¹⁷A.J. Ungersma, The Search for Meaning (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961); Don S. Browning, Atonement and Psychotherapy (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966).

attempt to maintain a "dualist" position, a position that becomes tenuous when Hiltner holds that the emergence of positive potentialities "from a hitherto confused and divided personality" have as their source "the operation of the Holy Spirit or of Divine Grace."¹⁸

This ambiguity is the product of the pastoral counseling movement's effort to relate spiritual wholeness to psychological wholeness in a way that maintains a theological and psychological integrity. He is caught on the firing line in the debate between two disciplines which have fundamentally different views of man, the universe, and change.

II. THE THEOLOGY-PSYCHOLOGY TENSION

The theology-psychology debate centers on the question of Divine revelation and the need of man to hear that revelation and be changed by it. Theology asserts that it "takes over" at the point where psychological processes stop. In summarizing the theological point of view, Homans writes that theology tends to view psychological growth and process as a part-process. He goes on to say that

"such a point of view, although articulated by different theologians in very different and complex vocabularies, remains, at least in this respect, rather simple: theological reality in the person transcends psychological reality, just as the self transcends its environment. Psychology, it is said, can clarify distortions in the dynamics of the self; but in doing so it shows only part of the total meaning of the person and his existence."¹⁹

¹⁸Hiltner, Pastoral Counseling, p. 32.

¹⁹Homans, p. 63.

In other words, theology insists that there is a reality independent of the reality of psychological development and social structures which is not subject to psychological interpretation. Moreover, it is this Divine Reality to which man must relate himself through faith in order to be fully transformed.

From this perspective a sense of psychosocial identity is only a part-process. A person can become fully whole only as he transcends this identity by allowing himself to be transformed by the Divine power and moving into a faith relationship with it. Tillich clearly makes this point with his assertion that the "courage to be in spite of the threat of nonbeing" must "be rooted in a power of being that is greater than the power of oneself and the power of one's world."²⁰ He calls this power the "hidden religious root," which is the "ground of being," or the "God above God," by whom one must be grasped if one is to be a truly self-affirming, whole person who lives in spite of the threat of nonbeing.²¹ Ultimate salvation is not to be found in psychotherapy. Neurotic anxieties are primarily the concern of the psychotherapist. Existential anxieties, which derive from the threat of nonbeing, are primarily the concern of the minister.²²

²⁰Paul Tillich, The Courage To Be (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952), p. 155.

²¹Ibid., pp. 182-190.

²²Ibid., pp. 70-71.

Psychology, on the other hand, generally denies the need of the existence of this Other Reality and views personality wholeness and personality growth as the products of psychological and social integration. Freud was particularly emphatic on this point.²³ While he does not share Freud's negative view of religious faith, and holds that man needs to continually transcend his identity, Erikson shapes his understanding of self-transcendence in terms of man's own integrative potential and his understanding of an ultimate world view in terms of a universal humanistic ethic.²⁴ Significantly, Erikson's model of a positive sense of psychosocial identity as an integrative process of growth suggests that self-transcendence and social transcendence are inherent potentials of man's psychological and social development whereby man is able to find a unified wholeness in spite of the estrangements which occur in the developmental stages.

Implicit in Erikson's understanding of psychosocial identity is the idea that transcendence is a part of normal psychological functioning. It is in the commitment to a sociocultural ideology that one finds a meaningful transcendent dimension of life. This adoption of a traditional theological category by psychology reflects the fact that some psychological schools of thought are claiming theological categories as

²³Sigmund Freud, The Future of An Illusion (Garden City: Doubleday, 1964).

²⁴Erik H. Erikson, Insight and Responsibility (New York: Norton, 1963), pp. 219-243.

their own. Maslow views the transcendent peak experience as a part of normal psychological functioning and observes correlations between the peak experiences and religious experience.²⁵ Lowen holds that a lack of faith is the root cause of neurotic depression.²⁶ Frankl points to the need for man to have a commitment to a transcendent universal framework of meaning and value.²⁷ Stotland has developed model of "a psychology of hope" which he considers to be empirically verifiable."²⁸

The implication of this development in psychological thinking is that the so-called "psychological-spiritual" dichotomy may not be a dichotomy at all, or at least may not be as severe as some theologians and psychologists would have us believe. What I am suggesting is that the transcendent Divine Reality of which the theologians speak is indeed a psychological reality. It is to be found in man's inherent

²⁵ Abraham H. Maslow, Toward A Psychology of Being (Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1962); Abraham H. Maslow, Religions, Values, and Peak Experiences (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1964).

²⁶ Alexander Lowen, Depression and the Body (Baltimore: Penguin, 1973).

²⁷ Viktor E. Frankl, Man's Search for Meaning (New York: Washington Square Press, 1963); Viktor E. Frankl, The Will to Meaning (New York: New American Library, 1969).

²⁸ Ezra Stotland, The Psychology of Hope (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1969).

potential to transcend himself and to be a self-fulfilling person. If this is true, the growth experience of therapy can be viewed as healing the God-man relationship, or at the very least, aspects of that relationship. This last assertion is based on the presupposition that growth in therapy means a movement toward an integrated wholeness of personality that frees one to be a self-fulfilling person. In other words, I am advocating a position of "spiritual reductionism" of the so-called "liberal" persuasion with some qualifications which will be clarified as the discussion develops.

This position is based on the assumption that psychology and theology have a great deal to say to each other. Bellah has stated:

"...theology and social science are parts of a single intellectual universe. To refuse to relate them is to admit intellectual bankruptcy; it is to admit an inability to confront the totality of human experience."²⁹

Some psychologies are confronting theology with the possibility that an ultimate, unconditional Transcendent Reality is operative in normal psychological processes, making man's relationship with God to some extent subject to psychological analysis. Theology, on the other hand, confronts any psychology that claims to present a whole picture of man with the challenge that man's wholeness cannot be fully understood without a conception of the operation of the Transcendent Reality of life in the lives of individuals and societies.

²⁹Robert N. Bellah, Leyond Belief (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), p. 207.

In the following section I will propose several ways in which psychological reality and theological reality can be related. The model of identity and alienated identity developed in previous chapters will provide the psychological framework for this discussion. I make no claim to having final answers, but can only suggest an approach which will need further development.

III. FAITH-IDENTITY AND REVELATION-AWARENESS

Propositions

This discussion will center on two simple propositions which will be briefly explored. First, the transforming quality of a positive sense of identity and the faith participation in the transcendent reality symbolized as God are different ways of describing common phenomenon. Second, revelation in the theological sense and therapeutic awareness in the Gestalt sense are also different ways of describing a common phenomenon.

Identity, Faith, and Transcendence

I will proceed on the assumption that there is a reality which transcends the reality of the natural world. By transcendent reality I mean that reality, which, as Wallace Stevens described it, "forces itself upon our consciousness and refuses to be managed and

mastered."³⁰ It is this reality in which man seeks his wholeness and finds his courage to live in spite of the finite limitations of individual and social life, and which judges the personal and social solutions to the issue of ultimate meaning and value.³¹

An obvious phenomenological implication of the identity model of the consensual religious person is that he is alienated from this transcendent reality. Internally, he is estranged from his essential potential to be a self-transforming being. Externally, through his totalization of a framework of meaning and value, he is alienated from the transforming potential of an ultimate world view. Neither his cultural nor his personal God-concepts connect him with the Transcendent Reality. The first is a totalization of God the way his culture sees him. The second is a totalization of the believer's perceived relationship with his punitive parents. Neither connect him with a reality independent of his manipulations. He fits Paul Tillich's description of man estranged in his existence.

"The state of existence is the state of estrangement. Man is estranged from the ground of his being, from other beings and from himself."³²

³⁰Wallace Stevens, Opus Posthumous (New York: Knopf, 1957), p. 238, cited by Bellah, p. 197.

³¹Bellah, p. 201.

³²Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), II, 44.

The theological perspective would assert that man's only solution to this state of estrangement is the participation through faith in the transcendent reality of the power of the ground of being or God. My assertion is that the function of the positive sense of identity is correlative to the theologian's conception of the function of faith. In other words, in the formulation of a positive sense of identity the individual finds a unity with and participates in the power of the transcendent reality of God.

I make this assertion for several reasons. First, as a sense of mastery, continuity, and wholeness, the positive identity affirms and participates in the open-ended process of growth. It affirms the self-transcending potentialities of the life cycle. A significant implication of Erikson's epigenetic principle of psychosocial development is that the life cycle of an individual is marked by an inherent pressure to develop psychosocial ego strengths that enable a person to live an integrated, whole life in spite of the estrangements which are also inherent to the process of development. Each development stage emerges as a crisis judging the gains the individual has made to that point, forcing him to make a decision for or against moving on to new strengths and integrations.

This is a reality of development which cannot be managed or mastered. The person may make a choice, as in the case of the consensual religious person, to deny his potential strength and give himself over to dependency on others, but the pressure of the potentiality for self-transformation remains. Therefore, while he may alienate him-

self from this force for self-transformation he cannot separate himself from it. It is inherently a part of his personality, forcing itself upon his consciousness in the vague feeling that something is wrong and the hope that things can be better.

With the formation of a positive sense of identity, one gives oneself up to this integrative, self-transforming power and accepts the risk that continuity and sameness are possible within the process of growth. There is significant truth in Perl's statement that "we cannot deliberately bring about changes in ourselves or in others."³³ To be transformed and self-fulfilled we must give ourselves up to our inherent powers of self-transformation and self-fulfillment. A positive sense of identity is a way of knowing oneself as being centered in this power and participating in it.

A second reason I assert that a positive sense of identity is the means whereby a person participates in and is united with transcendent reality is that identity is a psychosocial process in which personal history intersects with the transcendent reality of social history. The formulation of a sense of psychosocial identity of course involves self-objectification as well as self-realization. Significant others and society as a whole serve as the counterplayers for self-objectification.

³³Frederick Perls, Gestalt Therapy Verbatim (Lafayette, Ca: Real People Press, 1969), p. 19.

While these have a transcendent quality about them, they are limited as sources of ultimate reality. Beyond society stands history which, as Bellah points out, "is the proving ground for both personal and social values."³⁴ It is experienced as a judgment of the finite structures of society. Because history reveals the inadequacy of society, Bellah goes on to say that

"it becomes clear that society no more than the individual is a final repository of transcendence. Rather every society is itself forced to appeal to some higher jurisdiction, to justify itself not entirely on its actual performance but through its commitment to unrealized goals or values."³⁵

This societal perspective of a transcendent reality is formulated in terms of a framework of meaning and value which the individual incorporates in his identity through a commitment to an ideology. Through this commitment, the transcendent dimension of personal history and the transcendent dimension of a cultural history intersect in the positive sense of identity. In this integrated conceptualization of self in relationship to a transcendent framework of meaning and value the person finds an ultimate affirmation of the psychosocial strengths developed in childhood as well as an ultimate affirmation of his sense of identity. He is thereby enabled to live in spite of the inevitable estrangements of the developmental process, to be a centered person with a sense of mastery, continuity, and wholeness.

³⁴Bellah, p. 201.

³⁵Ibid.

From the theological perspective, faith accomplishes this function for a person. Stinnette indicates that the identity concern of the psychologist and the faith concern of the theologian are similar concerns.³⁶ Browning calls faith "a form of self-identity."³⁷ Faith is, of course, the central concern of theology, as Tillich clearly indicates when he writes that "the object of theology is what concerns us ultimately."³⁸ Defining faith as "ultimate concern," Tillich's understanding of it and its function for a person is analogous to the function of a positive sense of identity. He describes faith as "a unity of every element in the centered self," a "total and centered act of the personal self," and a "relation between the one who is concerned and his concern."³⁹ Functionally, it

"gives depth, direction and unity to all other concerns and, with them to the whole personality. A personal life which has these qualities is integrated, and the power of a person's personality is his faith."⁴⁰

Thus, like identity, faith performs an integrative, unifying function for the individual.

³⁶Charles R. Stinnette, Jr. "Reflection and Transformation: Knowing and Change in Psychotherapy and in Religious Faith," in Homans, p. 126.

³⁷Don Browning, "Faith and the Dynamics of Knowing," in Homans, p. 126.

³⁸Tillich, Systematic Theology, I, 12.

³⁹Paul Tillich, Dynamics of Faith (New York: Harper & Row, 1958), pp. 8-9.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 105.

A key element of faith, according to Tillich's analysis, is courage, which he defines as "the daring self-affirmation of one's own being in spite of the powers of "nonbeing" which are the heritage of everything finite."⁴¹ As I have indicated, the positive sense of identity is marked by the willingness to risk being one's self in spite of the negative threatening estrangements of the life cycle and the limitations of the ongoing process of internal and external life. It is this quality of courage, whether one is talking about identity or faith, that enables one to be a self-transcending person.

Theology does not deny man's ability to transcend himself. However, this self-transcendence is marked by an ambiguity because of man's finite limitations and because he is separated from his essence, i.e. his potential.⁴² To experience an unambiguous self-transformation, hence the healing of his existential estrangement, man must be claimed by a faith directed to what is truly ultimate.⁴³ In the universal sense this means "being opened by the Spiritual Presence to the transcendent unity of unambiguous life."⁴⁴ In the Christian perspective it means "being grasped by the New Being as it is manifest in Jesus as the Christ."⁴⁵

⁴¹Ibid., p. 17.

⁴²P. Tillich, Systematic Theology, III, 88-98.

⁴³Ibid., III, 130-131.

⁴⁴Ibid., III, 131.

⁴⁵Ibid.

The implication of this is that the self-transforming quality of the positive sense of identity is not the same as that of the transforming quality of Spiritual transcendence. Tillich makes this explicit when he states that

"faith can neither be identified with nor derived from any of the mental functions. Faith cannot be created by the procedures of the intellect, or by endeavors of the will, or by emotional movements. But, faith comprehends all this within itself, uniting and subjecting it to the Spiritual Presence's transforming power."⁴⁶

However, I have clearly shown that in formulating a positive sense of identity the person is choosing to be grasped by the transforming, integrative power of his self. In the positive sense of identity he gives himself up to a process of growth and fulfillment which can neither be managed nor mastered. If he tries to manage or master this process he formulates what I have called the alienated identity and definitely lives the life of an estranged being who does not experience wholeness and integrity within himself and with the world.

I do not mean to imply that the transcendent reality of God is reducible to simple psychological explanations. Certainly man has personal and collective finite limitations which preclude an understanding of God in simple psychological or sociological terms. The transcendent reality of God is larger than man himself. His mystery continually confronts any attempt to explain him be they theological, psychological,

⁴⁶Ibid., III, 143.

sociological, or biological. But this transcendent reality infuses the whole of personality and is the context in which the search for identity takes place.

In asserting that the goal of the quest for a positive sense of identity is the same as that of the faith quest, I take the position that the transcendent reality of God is an inherent part of man's psychological functioning. Those psychological and relational conflicts which block the development of a sense of wholeness, integration, and mastery, and therefore block the process of self-transformation, can then be seen as blocks to a relationship with the transcendent reality of God.

On the basis of this analysis it can be said that the consensual religious person from the psychological perspective needs a positive sense of identity and from the theological perspective needs a faith which will link him with the transcendent reality of integrity and transformation. In other words, he needs a God of integrity and transformation.

This last phrase is borrowed from Herbert Richardson's analysis of three myths of transcendence. He holds that the chief aspects of a religious experience are the feelings of wholeness, rightness, and well-being which transform and convert a person to a sense of the wholeness of life.⁴⁷ These feelings are produced by the individual's participa-

⁴⁷ Herbert W. Richardson, "Three Myths of Transcendence," in Herbert W. Richardson and Donald R. Cutler (eds.) Transcendence (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), pp. 99-101.

tion in the Whole (transcendent reality), and lead to a redirection of his sense of rightness (judgment), and wellbeing (salvation).⁴⁸ He further holds, and significantly so for the position I have taken that

"with regards to the psychological and cognitive structure of such an experience, there is no difference between the transforming and elevating power of a finite whole and the power of the infinite Whole."⁴⁹

The implication of this is that in the experience of the transforming power of God the individual experiences his own powers of self-transformation and reorients his identity, i.e. centers his identity, on this new experience of wholeness, rightness, and wellbeing. To turn this equation around, my contention is that in experiencing the wholeness which results from the resolving of a psychological conflict, a person to some degree experiences the Divine Wholeness. I will shortly return to how this can be seen to happen in the therapeutic situation.

Richardson goes on to examine three myths of transcendence, which are ways of symbolizing the experience of the Divine Transcendent Reality. The first is the "separation-return" myth which "reiterates the universal experience of birth (separation from the mother), the subsequent experience of feeding and being held,..., and the anxieties created by the mother's...coming and going."⁵⁰ In terms of identity, or wholeness, such a myth objectifies a person's feeling that his unity

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 101.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 107.

with the whole of life is to be found in the restoration of a basic sense of dependent relatedness, thereby overcoming his anxiety about the forces of life that are pushing him toward individuality and plurality.⁵¹ The God of this myth of transcendence is the compensator for man's sense of helplessness.⁵²

Richardson asserts that the separation-and-return myth is held to be false by Western society because "Western men are formed psychologically...by the myth of conflict and vindication," whereby man's individuality is emphasized at the expense of other people.⁵³ This is the myth of Judaism and Christianity, the myth which

"tells a story of man that comes from his being limited, oppressed, and suffering. Through a testing, man attains to the vindication of his personhood, his independent being. So, for example, archetypal Western stories are the bondage and exodus of Israel, the testing and triumph of David, the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, the martyrdom and glorification of the saints. All these stories inculcate a sense of reality as a structure of overagainstness experienced through conflict and formed in the person through his triumphal suffering."⁵⁴

In the conflict and vindication myth identity is formulated in terms of the individual as being one over against others. This myth enables man to grow away from dependence on his mother and achieve a relative independence in terms of a transcendent God, who is also overagainst the individual. But this is an ambivalent independence because the person is dependent on others, including God, to provide the conflicting

⁵¹Ibid., pp. 107-108

⁵²Ibid., p. 108.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 108-109.

counterplayer by which the person can vindicate his own personal sense of identity.

Richardson states that a person who lives by the conflict and vindication myth cannot have a positive sense of identity because he is "nothing in himself." His self-definition and his self-fulfillment must come from outside himself as he boasts his self-esteem at the expense of others.⁵⁵ The God of the conflict and vindication myth is the one who limits and is overagainst the person; he is the one who vindicates man's sense of nothingness.⁵⁶ This would seem to be the God which Freud was so opposed to and has similarities to the God of the personal God-concept of the consensual religious person.

According to Richardson the myth of conflict and vindication might be useful in scarcity societies where "real enemies threaten man on every side."⁵⁷ However, Western man lives in a society of abundance, a society that requires a positive sense of identity.⁵⁸ Consequently, Richardson maintains that man needs an identity myth which will serve as the foundation of a psychosocial order. Such a myth holds that man no longer lives by dependence or obedience or as "a part of" or "overagainst," but that man can now live within his integrity and strength to be a self-fulfilling person. Such a myth would affirm man's need and potential to express and expand himself from

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 110.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 112.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 111.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

within. This is the myth of integrity and transformation whereby transcendent reality is correlated with "self-transcendence, expanded consciousness, spiritual rebirth, and divinization."⁵⁹ Richardson summarizes this third myth of transcendence by saying:

"In simplest terms we may say that the God of integrity and transformation is not the one in whom we live (separation and return) or the one who limits and is overagainst us (conflict and vindication), but the one who lives in us. In our integrity we can experience transcendence as our potentiality to become more, as the demand for self-transformation."⁶⁰

Richardson's position is, then, that not only is God for man (Deus pro nobis) but also God is in man (Deus in nobis). He is in man in the potential of every person to develop a positive sense of identity, to be a person who has integrated the internal and external factors of his life and his personal history and the history of his culture into a coherent sense of self in a process of transformation.

The implication of this for the position I have taken is that when a person discovers a positive sense of identity he is also discovering a faith which links him with the transforming power of the Transcendent Reality. Certainly, the consensual religious person does not have such a relationship with his God. Rather, his God-concepts serve to keep him alienated from his potential to be a self-transforming person. His cultural God-concept supports the illusion that one's alienated identity has a meaningful place in the world. The personal God-concept reminds the individual that he is a helpless person who can be nothing but helpless and inferior if he is to be loved. From

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 112.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

the theological perspective he needs to discover a faith in a God of transformation and integrity who transcends his two totalistic conceptions of God and who will affirm his inner strength to be a self-transforming person. From the psychological perspective, he needs to integrate the conflicting parts of his personality by getting in touch with his own powers of self-transformation, whereby he can have a coherent sense of self which he knows is affirmed by others and the Cosmic Wholeness of the universe.

Implied in this last statement is the idea that the God of transformation and integrity will be revealed to the consensual religious person if he gets in touch with and affirms his own potential to be an integrated wholeness in the process of becoming. A goal of some psychotherapeutic schools is, of course, the working through of psychological conflicts so that the individual emerges from therapy with a new sense of integration and wholeness, a new sense of mastery and strength. This is certainly true of Gestalt therapy which centers on self-awareness and situational awareness as the means whereby integration takes place. In the next section I will examine several ways in which awareness can be seen as correlative to the revelation of God.

Revelation and Awareness

Hypothesis. I asserted earlier that revelation in the theological sense and therapeutic awareness in the Gestalt sense are different ways of describing a common phenomenon. My basic hypothesis is that revelation and awareness are both modes of transformation. As such they

provide a bridge for understanding therapeutic change as a healing of the God-man relationship. In this section I will point out and discuss the correlations between these two modes of transformation.

Revelation and awareness have these common characteristics:

1. Both have the goal of transforming man from the state of estrangement to the condition of wholeness.
2. Both are experiences of judgment, salvation, and wholeness.
3. Both are experiences of the transforming power of Transcendent Reality.

The Goal of Transformation. From the perspective of Christian theology, revelation is God's self-disclosure of his healing love in the event of Jesus Christ.⁶¹ The goal of this revelation is to heal the estranged condition of man in his existence thereby restoring him to a meaningful wholeness of life. As H. Richard Niebuhr states it:

"Whatever else revelation means, it does mean an event in our history which brings rationality and wholeness into the confused joys and sorrows of personal existence and allows us to discern order in the brawl of communal histories...."⁶²

Thus, the goal of revelation is to bring to man a sense of ultimate fulfillment and wholeness.

⁶¹Stinnette, p. 97.

⁶²H. Richard Niebuhr, The Meaning of Revelation (New York: Macmillan, 1952), pp. 109-110, cited by Stinnette, p. 97.

The goal and function of "awareness" in the understanding of Gestalt therapy is also fulfillment and wholeness. Awareness is that which leads to the healing of the "unfinished situations" (psychological conflicts) which block the growth and development of the self as an integrated wholeness (Gestalt) in the process of self-fulfillment.⁶³ In other words, the goal of awareness is to remove those conflicts which lead to stagnation and repression and to open the individual to his potential for wholeness and self-fulfillment. Consequently, it can be said that both revelation and awareness function to transform man from a state of alienation to a state of wholeness, integrity, and fulfillment.

The Experience of Judgment, Salvation, and Wholeness. The revelation of the love of God in Jesus Christ is accompanied by judgment, salvation, and wholeness. In Christ man is confronted with his lack of faith in the ultimate meaning of existence.⁶⁴ But in Jesus Christ there comes the possibility of salvation, i.e. the healing of man's estrangement. Salvation always accompanies revelation.⁶⁵ In the healing of his estrangement man finds a new wholeness or faith which centers his being on Christ as the ultimate revelation of the love of God.

⁶³Frederick Perls, Ralph E. Hefferline, and Paul Goodman, Gestalt Therapy (New York: Dell, 1951), p. ix.

⁶⁴Stinnette, p. 107.

⁶⁵Tillich, Systematic Theology, I, 144-147.

A similar dynamic is at work in the "awareness" of Gestalt therapy. As a mode of transformation awareness is characterized by a "contact" with, or a being in touch with the present situation; a "sensing" of the situation, an "excitement" or emotional component, and a "Gestalt formation."⁶⁶ Awareness is a transforming moment of truth about oneself, an event, an achievement of a Gestalt in which part and whole are fused into one. It is an event occurring in the here and now. "Contact" with something in one's internal or external environment challenges one with the decision of assimilation or rejection.⁶⁷ It presents the challenge of making a "creative" adjustment to one's environment.⁶⁸ If a person rejects contact then he avoids facing the reality of his situation. If he accepts contact then he is faced with the demand for change, which is the assimilation of the new or "novel" in the situation.⁶⁹ Consequently, it can be said that awareness is accompanied by a judgment which carries an imperative for self-transformation.

Salvation and wholeness can be seen as accompanying awareness in the respect that awareness always brings the healing of "an uncompleted situation" hence the feeling of a new sense of rightness, integration, and wholeness. Thus, it is clear that there is a correlation between the ways that awareness and revelation function in the individual. Both bring judgment, salvation, and wholeness.

⁶⁶Perls, Hefferline and Goodman, pp. viii-ix.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 210.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 210.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 210.

The Transforming Power of Revelation and Awareness. The theological assertion is that a person is changed by revelation and that he does not change himself. He can only choose to participate in the transforming power of God and thereby let himself be changed by it.

The Gestalt understanding of awareness is similar to this. In the Gestalt perspective the process of maturation is a movement from environmental support to self-support.⁷⁰ What this essentially means is the development of a faith in one's own potential to be a self-fulfilling person. Awareness looses this potential to be who one is. It lets Gestalt formation happen. We cannot transform ourselves by a deliberate effort as Perls indicates when he states that "we cannot deliberately bring about changes in ourselves or in others."⁷¹ We can only risk giving ourselves up to the self-transforming power inherent in our being. This is what happens in the event of awareness in the therapeutic situation. In such an event a person is grasped by the power of self-transformation, and emerges from the experience with a new sense of integrity and wholeness. It is therefore an experience of a transcendent reality operative in one's life.

Conclusion. There are probably other correlations between revelation and awareness, such as a possible correlation of both being symbolic acts, but these which have been outlined are sufficient to make my point. Here I am pointing in a direction that needs further development, not setting forth a complete theory. Although I am hesitant to say that revelation and awareness are one and the same thing,

⁷⁰Perls, Gestalt Therapy Verbatim, p. 29.

I do assert that these similarities indicate that there is an element of the transforming power of the transcendent reality of God infusing the awareness mode of transformation in therapy. Through awareness a person experiences to some extent the ultimate Wholeness (faith and identity) of life. Consequently, I conclude that in therapy, where awareness is the means of self-discovery, a person moves toward a healing of his relationship with the God of integrity and wholeness as he moved toward the discovery of his own powers of self-transformation.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The general intent of this chapter has been to accomplish one of the goals of this paper, that of examining the theological implications of the constructed model for pastoral counseling. This examination has centered on the essential question of whether or not the finding of a positive sense of identity in the psychotherapeutic situation leads to a healing of the Divine - man relationship. In regards to the model, this is held to be an important issue because the consensual religious person is alienated spiritually as well as psychologically.

Based on an analysis of the correlation of the theological concept of faith and the psychological concept of identity and an analysis of the correlation of the theological concept of revelation and the Gestalt understanding of awareness as a mode of therapeutic change, the conclusion has been that the finding of a positive sense of identity through awareness in therapy can bring a person into an affirming faith

relationship with a God of transformation and integrity. This means that in therapy the consensual religious person has the opportunity to discover a positive sense of identity and a faith which will open him to the wholeness of himself and life. Therapy would enable him to give up his helplessness and become a self-transforming person in the process of growth and expansion, and hence to overcome his alienation from self, others, the world, and God.

This is a general conclusion. The task remaining is to examine its specific implications for the model of pastoral counseling as presented in the preceding pages.

It first has a significant implication for understanding the aims of pastoral counseling as those of the mission of the church. Here I am referring specifically to that ultimate goal of healing the vertical dimension of man's relationships. If the movement toward wholeness, integration, and mastery in therapy does indeed result in a new sense of relatedness to a Cosmic Wholeness, then it can be said that, whenever such movement occurs in the pastoral counseling situation, the pastoral counselor is involved in accomplishing the end goal of the church. What this means in terms of the pastoral counseling model is that it moves the goal of healing the vertical dimension from the top of the step ladder to being one of the more immediate aims of the pastoral counseling situation. This does not mean that the healing of the God-man relationship is always the objective of the counseling process. Not all counseling has the goal of personality change, but may, for example, be directed toward coping with an immediate crisis.

But to the extent that the consensual religious person experiences some new sense of his potential for self-transformation, and therefore a new experience of God, the ultimate goal of the church is at least in part being accomplished.

Implicit in this discussion is the idea that the question of the counselee's belief in God may not necessarily have to be made explicit in the counseling situation for a change to occur in his God-concept. In other words, I am suggesting that, if in the process of counseling the consensual religious person formulates a positive sense of identity, he will also reformulate and integrate his two God-concepts into a positive, affirming, and personally meaningful understanding of God. In short, he will experience God in a new way.

On the other hand, it also seems likely that an explicit exploration of the consensual person's two God-concepts in the counseling process, an exploration that brings about a reformulation and integration of these concepts in a personally meaningful and affirming way, can result in a psychological integration and a formulation of a positive sense of identity. Here I am asserting that both the implicit and explicit approaches are methodologically viable alternatives for the pastoral counselor.

This assertion provides the general hypotheses for several research projects. One study could examine the change of God-concept as the result of the healing of psychological conflicts in a therapeutic process where the person's God-concepts are not made explicit. Another study could examine the movement toward a positive sense of identity as

the result of the explicit dealing with the God-concept in therapy and the change of that concept as a result of therapy.

To hold that the consensual religious person can find a faith in an affirming God in the discovery of his own potential and power for self-transformation, also implies that any theological understanding of the pastoral counseling model must also include an affirmation of the potential for the discovery of the transforming power of God within the depths of the individual as well as within the counselor-counselee relationship. I do not mean to deemphasize the position that the saving power of God's love becomes efficacious in the counseling relationship as this love is revealed in the counselor's acceptance of the counselee and as the counselee experiences and accepts this affirmation. I do, however, hold that the discovery of the transforming love of the "God within" is of equal importance in a theological understanding of pastoral counseling.

Certainly, the counselor-counselee relationship is a fundamental element in therapeutic change, but so also is the counselee's own inner potential for self-transformation. In the final analysis, the counselor can only be a facilitator of change. He can create an atmosphere of acceptance in which the counselee finds it possible to risk growth. He can facilitate growth through the use of psychotherapeutic techniques. He can act as a positive, affirming counterplayer to the counselee's sense of identity. But, he cannot change him. The counselee can only experience growth as he discovers his own resources for self-transformation. He can only move beyond the security of the

therapist-patient relationship when his own sense of mastery and self-confidence began to grow.

If this is a reality of therapeutic change and if there is a God of integrity and transformation to be discovered within one's potential for self-transformation, then, an understanding of the "God within" as a source of therapeutic growth is an important consideration in a theological understanding of pastoral counseling. This is a particularly significant consideration in the case of the consensual religious person whose two God-concepts reflect and support his alienation from his essential potential to be a self-transforming being and from a relationship with Transcendent Reality. He needs to be grasped by the power of self-transformation and by the power of the God of integrity and transformation.

A third implication for the pastoral counseling model to be found in the conclusion that the consensual religious person can find a faith in an affirming God in the discovery of his own potential and power for self-transformation is that it lends support to the position that the uniqueness of the pastoral counselor in relationship to the secular psychotherapist can be claimed only in terms of training, role definition, and social context. This is at least true in comparison to the secular psychotherapists whose therapeutic goals are the healing of psychological conflict and the movement toward psychological wholeness. If the healing of the God-man relationship occurs at least to some extent as the result of a movement toward psychological wholeness, then the pastoral counselor and the secular psychotherapist are about

the same task.

This position is not meant to downgrade the unique contribution the pastoral counselor can make to the therapeutic process, particularly if that process involves the consensual religious person. Because of his own religious training and his own faith in the healing power of the Divine Reality, he presumably brings to the counseling situation a special sensitivity to the counselee's quest for faith and a positive sense of identity. Moreover, because of his training, his role definition, and his standing as a representative of a religious community, he is an authority who can deal with ultimate questions, particularly those dealing with the consensual religious person's relationship with God, as they arise in the counseling process.

There are without doubt other implications for the pastoral counseling model. These are sufficient, however, to indicate that the model of the relationship of God-concept to identity in a consensual religious person has significant theological implications for pastoral counseling, and for that matter, the psychotherapeutic endeavor in general. The limited intent of this theological investigation was to indicate directions that further theoretical studies could follow. This task has been accomplished.

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